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CECIL:

OR,

THE ADVENTURES OF A COXCOMB.

A NOVEL.

He was such a delight, — such a coxcomb, — such a jewel of a man!

BYRON'S JOURNAL.

SECOND EDITION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.

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CECIL;

OR THE

ADVENTURES OF A COXCOMB.

CHAPTER I.

So regeln wir die Mond und Sonnentage
Sitten vor den Pyramiden
Zu der Volker Hochgericht
Ueberschwemung, Krieg und Frieden
Und Versiehen kein Gesicht.

GOETHE.

My poetry is the dream of the sleeping passions. When they are awake, I cannot speak their language—only in their somnambulism.

BYRON.

DEAR reader!—wert thou ever in Germany? I do not mean, didst thou ever steamboat it up or down the Rhine,—or swallow the natural

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physic of the waters of Baden or Aix-la Chapelle; —for who hath *not?*—I mean, didst thou ever abide in the soft bosom of a *recht herzliche* German family,—drink of their beer,—smoke of their tobacco,—and chaw metaphysics with them; —the extraordinary exaltation of their minds justifying itself to yours by anxiety to lose sight of degradation of body, so preposterously gross and nasty. By Jupiter! if the spitting-box and beer-bottle do not incline a man to refine with hair-breadth casuistry upon some psychological theory capable of propelling the soul into the clouds at the rate of the Nassau-balloon, the devil himself would not make a metaphysician of him!—

But I say again, dear reader, wert thou ever in cordial, kind-hearted, boozy, foozy, Deutschland? —Kennst du das Land, not where the Citronen blühn, but where the lindens shed their summer bloom?—where the round-polled acacia, like a green mop or a sham orange-tree, adorns the beer-garden?—where weeping-willows hanging over a pond enlivened by fancy ducks, wring

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poesy out of the soul of the pale student?—where learning hath run herself to earth,—where poetry hovereth in the air,—where the drama, as the Transcendental School would say, "kindleth eternally her terrible Energies, like the Destinies spinning a thread of Asbestos;—where Classical Lore hath found an inner Temple, in which the Law to lay down—the Divinities re-inshrining, wherewith he hath run away charged, like some old Corinthian, from the sack of his City, with his Household Gods upon his back,—and where all that is Coarse, Uncivilized, and Matter-of-fact in Human Existence, with all that is Heroic,—Sublime,—Creative,—Soul-refining,—Purpose-exalting,—Hope-exciting, for evermore united is?—"

If not, trust me thou art incapable of appreciating—guess what!—I give it thee in ten,—I give it thee in twenty,—as Madame de Sévigné said or wrote to her daughter. It is neither Goethe,—Jean Paul,—Beethoven,—the Sonnets or Glyptotheca of Ludwig I.—nor the policy of

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Metternich, nor the mysteries of the Burschenschaft,—nor any other of the grand or glorious incomprehensibilities that "with the Moral Hieroglyphics of the Land of Spiritual Influences interwoven or co-existent are." If not, I say,—for thou art so slow of surmise that I must fain disclose my mystery,—if not, thou canst little appreciate the influence of the knitting-needle, in the history of domestic life!—

A casual observer might spend six months in Germany, particularly in Rhenish Germany, and carry away an impression that the men were never without pipes in their mouths, or the women without knitting-needles in their hands. I once saw the body of a drowned woman taken out of the Rhine, round which five anxious individuals were clustered, labouring to minister to its resuscitation. Not one of them dreamed of removing his pipe from his mouth, while the work of life and death was proceeding under his hands! Nay, I once saw a fair Tedescan exposed to the soliciting of a lover, eloquent as Mephistopheles,

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impassioned as St. Preux, tender as Romeo, enterprising as Lovelace, and handsome as Antonin de Noailles,—who proceeded the while with her lambswool-stocking, as industriously as the witch of the Caucasus!

I do not say who it was;—the name of the parties is nothing to the purpose; but she plied those two long, black, whalebone knitting-needles as if the fate of the universe hung upon her stitches!—

But, lest any unkind person,—and the world to which I write is as bitter as Rochefoucault's maxims or the elder daughters of Lear,—should ascribe the imperturbability of the heroine to lack of merit in the hero, I beg to add, that I have seen in the Hof Theater of Vienna, (the central heart of German civilization,) a gentle creature weep Danubes of tears over the sorrows of Thekla or the woes of Amalia, — then, almost ere the curtain fell, certainly before the bodies were cleared from the stage, quietly re-assume her confounded knitting-needles, as

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though they contained balm for her wounded feelings!

As to me, I swear that if Cleopatra had invited me to sail with her on the Cydnus, and under her purple canopy chosen to amuse herself with knitting, even though the stocking or brace were destined to Cecil Danby in lieu of Mark Antony, I should have dropped asleep while watching the hitching of her fair hands and jerking of her majestic elbows.

By all this, my public will be induced to conjecture that I had some difficulty in keeping my eyes open under the influence of the evening sun, the buzzing flies, the two o'clock dinner, the Rhenish wine, and the detestable stitchery upon which the blue eyes of Wilhelmina von Schwanenfeldt were riveted, while I tried to make it intelligible to her that the individual seated by her side on the sofa, and usually divided from her by the width and Andernach pavement of a street,—was nearer akin to her in all the brighter sensibilities of the soul, than

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the stamping Herr Bau-Berg-und-Weg-Inspector, or any other native of the land which wrote Werter, and luxuriates in sausages and small beer.

I poured out my soul in a happy mixture of French, English, German, Latin, and gibberish; and as she had sufficiently comprehended the same when I tried to make her understand that I did not eat apricot-sauce with my *foie gras*, I thought she might prove equally intelligent when I talked about the stars and the flowers,—Schatzchen,—heliotropiums,—kindred souls,—the music of the spheres,—the immortality of love,—and all the other little nothings-at-all with which the Cupids of the banks of the Rhine tip their arrows, as Camdeo, on those of the Ganges, tippeth *his* with bees and rose-buds.

At every fresh outburst of sentiment, Wilhelmina gently raised her eyes from her knitting, and fixed them upon me,—large, dilated, and blue as one of Wedgewood's saucers;—then, letting them fall again upon her quilt, as once more I launched forth into those rhapsodies which, from the days

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of Jupiter and Alcmena, to those of Dr. Dyonysius, ever strove to shake the foundations of conjugal fidelity, — gently uplifted them once more, at the conclusion, as a wax doll at the instigation of the wire wherewith her little lady silently uncloses her glassy eyes.

The Imagination is a shocking gad-about, — the "*folle de la maison.*"—There are moments when, like Ariel, she puts a girdle round about the earth; and there are others when, on the contrary, she causeth the said earth to whiz round like a knife-grinder's wheel. When she chooses, she can make eleven thousand angels dance on the point of a needle; or concentrate all the events of a life, all the heroisms of Alexander or Wellington the Great, into the millionth part of a second. But I very much question whether the powers of the Imagination were ever more put to the test, than by myself, when supplying an interpretation to those silent looks of Wilhelmina!—

Every time die Unbegreifliche raised her heaven-

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ly eyes, I strove to read her thoughts in their azure heaven. Like an astrologer, starstruck and bewildered, I sent forth my soul, as it were, in quest of hers; and at moments, fancied I had overtaken the bright fugitive and was intermingling my thoughts with its aspirings. I grew more and more eloquent,—more and more impassioned.—I began to feel that I was making an impression.—I had got the ear of the house.—I warmed with my subject and my situation.—I grew emphatic as Clavigo.—My very German flowed clearer; nearly as intelligible as Lady ——'s English. It was impossible that even the serenest of knitters could stand it long.

I saw that I was reaching a crisis.—Provided the tribunal, or particular business, or particular friend, or small account which had carried off the Herr Bau-Berg-und-Weg-Inspector, detained him half an hour longer, I felt persuaded that my next visit to the garden of Eden on the Nassau road, would be paid *tête-à-tête*, and on the express proposition of the gentle creature,

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still a world of affection in my debt, for having stolen Schatzchen in order to bring it back again, — endangering my precious neck and precious soul as a purloiner of piping bullfinches.

I fixed my eyes graspingly upon her heavenly face. — She grew restless. — Her colour came and went. — The knitting seemed a moment to vibrate in her hands. I was about to imprison them within my own, (which would have been easy enough, for I was sitting much closer to her than etiquette could have found means to justify,) when, lo! — suddenly flinging down the knitting-needle contained in her left hand, she placed it before her mouth; and within an inch of my beating heart executed a sonorous expectoration, as loud as the report of a culverin. — The product she deposited at my feet! —

Und damit holla! — Let us draw a veil over the crimes of Beauty! — The sequel of this accursed climax of my disenchantment, would be described by a dramatist in three words, ap-

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pended to the part of Cecil Danby — "Exit in distraction." I trust my public is too indignant and disgusted to wish for more. I should, in fact, have passed over Coblentz in solemn silence, but for the consciousness that, every summer, an enormous proportion of the academic youth of the three kingdoms enjoys its vacation between Rotterdam and Strasburg,— in considerable danger of being deluded into bad English and bad logic by the study of the turgid bombast of modern Almaine; and still greater, of falling into adventures with blue-saucer-eyed heroines, who exchange kisses at the window with a favourite bird, and roses and forget-me-nots by moonlight with a favourite swain.

Such a conclusion to such a love-passage as mine, would, I am convinced, drive the ethereal spirit of Love as efficiently from their unsophisticated bosoms, as fumigation and bad Latin ever exorcised Sathanas from a man possessed, in days of yore; and to avoid such a disruption of the soul (for Love once forcibly expelled

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from the breast of youth, leaves, like the gigantic ghost which expanded from the Castle of Otranto, the whole structure in ruins,) I am in conscience bound to admit that, not choosing to be spat upon like a Jewish gaberdine, I ordered post-horses that night, and took myself off, by Schaffhausen, into Switzerland the following morning.

The land of the mountain and flood was indispensable to re-romanticize my spirit to the pitch from which it had been precipitated by ——, but enough of her! — I will not defile my grey goose-quill, that is my patent Bramah, by writing her name again!—

If a spark of latent poetry exist within the breast of man or woman, it must be called forth by collision with the rocks and stones wherein, instead of finding sermons, Byron found his third canto of Childe Harold; and *I*, regeneration after being Wilhelminefied. Torrents and precipices,—the lonely lake,—the silent glacier, — enchanted my soul, so soon as my health

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enabled me to share the allotted pains and pleasures of the tourist;—and finally, I took up my quarters at Vevay, resolved for one short winter to see what I could make out of the society of a man universally cited as the pleasantest in London and Paris, but with whom, at present, I kept up a very slight acquaintance, — to wit, the Honourable Cecil Danby.

The spring found me still loitering near the lovely shores of Lake Leman; still spell-bound at Clarens,—

Sweet Clarens!—birth-place of deep love!

It was to join me at Geneva that, the following year, Byron betook himself in the same direction. One of the wicked wits of the wickedest and wittiest of times, has said that "there is something in the misfortunes of our dearest friends not altogether displeasing to us." — I trust there was nothing in the mortifications which just then overtook poor Byron, from which I was capable of extracting comfort. But

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if they did not afford me pleasure, I own they excited my amazement!—I had left him the spoiled child of London,—*the* poet and lion of the day;—the bridegroom of an heiress, who was also a beauty and a *bel esprit*, and the idol of the whole residue of her sex. He rejoined me, at the close of little more than a year's separation, a paria, a banished man, a monster rejected by the caprices of Great Britain!—In *his* case, the re-action was as sudden as absurd. So extraordinary a man as my noble friend could not expect to be treated in an ordinary manner.—But the pit and gallery of society,—the vulgar groundlings,—had exceeded permission in flinging dirt and rotten apples in the face of their favourite actor!

Lord Byron afforded one among a thousand proofs that the most fatal charge you can make against a man, is an indefinite one. It might be very inconvenient to Jupiter to embrace a cloud; but it is quite as unsatisfactory to have to fight one. People looked unutterable things when

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they alluded to the sufferings of Lady Byron. A horrid mystery overhung the separation of the unhappy couple;—and such of the survivors of that period as remember the ostracism of one of the finest fellows breathing, will scarcely recall to mind without indignation, that the putting asunder of those whom God had joined, is now admitted to have arisen from the mere estrangement so often engendered by pecuniary embarrassments!

To Byron himself, such a result of his duns and bailiffs seemed so utterly incredible, that he could not believe himself to labour under the stigma of having married an heiress to pay his debts, and maltreated her as a punishment for their non-payment; but seemed to fancy he must have attempted assassination in his sleep, or committed forgery without knowing it. It is some comfort to those who cherish his memory, that "the late remorse of love," *though* late, has not been wanting.

Nota Bene: The two men of my times to whom alone I concede the title of sublime,

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Napoleon and Byron, were both deserted by their wives!—It is a fault for which, I fear, themselves must stand accountant. Both were men who would have been good, had they not chosen to be great. But the thirst of distinction, if indulged to excess, becomes fiendish as the thirst for blood. The defence of Napoleon's kindly nature, so warmly appreciated by all who approached him nearly, I leave to the eloquence of his biographers. On that of Byron, which manifested itself without remission towards me and my distresses, I must be permitted to expatiate.—

I do not pretend that in many things he may not have proved mean, selfish, savage; —but I know, that of all my acquaintance, there is not one, who, if reared by such a mother, rejected by such a wife, and coaxed into egotism by the flatteries of such a host of toadies, would not have come forth from the furnace, fifty times as hard, as hot, and deteriorated with fifty times as much alloy, as he with whom I

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spent so many hours of pleasing sadness upon the banks of Lake Leman; — the man who devoted his blood to the cause of Greece, and who was finally bled to death at Missolonghi.

Both of us were in the feverish frame of mind arising from a sense of injury. — Byron's exaltation of spirit showed itself in unnatural mirth, — mine in profound despondency. — But his frantic laughter and my frantic tears sprang from a common source. Would that the bitterness of Cecil Danby could have qualified the waters of Helicon, to fertilize so fair a field as that which over-shadows with laurels the name and grave of my noble friend! — But while Byron was plucking the stars from their spheres to form a circlet that might supersede his crown of thorns, a wreath of nettles was the utmost I could hope to accomplish. *His* ardent soul soared into the majestic altitudes of heaven; but the sublunary eyes of Cis Danby were evermore riveted upon the waste places of this world.

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As I said just now, in speaking of my poor lost Arthur, we bring with us into this shabby little planet, a reflection of the heavenly light from which our souls are emitted; but the longer we live, the more the earthly particles obtain the ascendancy over its brightness, and blot out the spark divine. Our clay becomes mud; and the effulgence of our spirit

> Base and unlustrous as the smoky light,
> That 's fed by stinking tallow!—

I crave pardon for the homeliness of the simile;—but Shakspeare and Molière are privileged. Like the long-eared gentleman of antiquity, who converted everything he touched into gold, those immortal bards have rendered classical even tallow-candles and *tartes à la crême!*—

Metaphors apart, as I recovered from my grief, I found myself growing a vile materialist. The brute was beginning to predominate in my nature. Nor was there anything in the society of Byron and his "co-mates and brothers in exile,"

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calculated to sweeten my imagination. Most persons of very refined minds with whom I ever come in contact, are coarse in their enjoyments as a country squire ; and the only transcendental Platonists of my acquaintance, are beer-bibbing German students, at the mere recollection of whose habits of life, one's gorge rises.

As to the noble Childe, I could relate anecdotes of his diversions when maddened by persecution and misrepresentation, which the Dean and Chapter of Westminster would reprint in golden capitals, as an apology to posterity for the decanatorial prudery which excluded his ashes from a church where Buckingham hath a grave, and Dryden a monumental inscription.

But Byron has suffered enough at the hands of his friends ! — I was near coming it Heraclitus over the world, when those Conversations saw the light ! — To see the public accept such a portraiture, as that of Byron ; — embracing

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"a lubberly postmaster's boy," and fancying it "sweet Anne Page!"—To see the flashing, dashing, irritable Byron, set up as a *plastron* to be lectured and documented;—pearls and diamonds snatched from his mouth, and toads and frogs substituted in their stead!—To find *him* play the part in the dialogue, which dunce does in the Tutor's Assistants of modern tuition, where the little boy inquires with much *naïveté*, —"Mamma! does the sun go round the earth?" and mamma replies, "No, Georgy! —the earth goes round the sun!—Georgy will be a good boy, and know better another time." Grant me patience or wit to indite a new edition of the fable of the Fly on the wheel!—

Byron himself, instead of "turning out his silver lining on the night," delighted to expose his blackest lining to the day,—nay, to adopt a temporary sable lining for the express purpose of making a boast of. But this is no excuse for the perfidy of his associates.

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In his life-time, I often expressed to him my wonder at the total deficiency of elegance of mind characterising the women who obtained an ascendancy over him. The Beatrice of his worship was always some sorry creature. His butler, old Fletcher, has immortalized for the edification of posterity, his lordship's extreme susceptibility to female domination;—but after-times will discern the surpassing vulgarity of the Betty Finnikin school, to which he fell a prey:—the Miss Carolina-Wilhelmina-Amelia-Skeggs-like pretensions of their refinement. The Guiccioli,—Margarita,—Marianna,—and others, even more lavishly endowed with what Gay, in his Newgate Pastoral, calls "the ogle of the rattle-snake," successively fascinated the brightest and weakest of mankind.—But my business is to narrate my own Adventures,—not those of George Gordon, Lord Byron.—

For my part, I never in my life could persuade myself to descend to a Venus, Muse, or

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Grace, disfigured by a camlet petticoat. *My* notions of beauty are essentially aristocratic. I adore the women of Vandyke. Within the shrine of my imagination, woman stands upon a foot-cloth of velvet, lest her redundant satin robes should touch this nether earth. Though drawn up perhaps by a string of orient pearl, or a still whiter hand,—a hand of alabaster, laced by azure veins,—those garments of glistening sheen must evermore rustle around her, as if to impart a double charm to the graceful trimly waist, developed by the gorgeous stomacher. I must have her hair dishevelled into slender ringlets, to float upon her swan-like throat and shoulders. I must have her shapely arm, such as should enfold an Emperor in its coil.

All this may be an indication of my corrupt and meretricious taste. But so it is, that the fancy of Cecil Danby must be enthralled, ere his heart submit to bondage.

The Nut-brown maid is to me a homely crea-

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ture; and your "neat-handed Phillis," with her "savoury messes," a kitchen-girl peeling onions. I have no taste for the Rural in animated nature.—Its nails are dirty,—it wears black stockings,—it eschews the tooth-brush,—it scratches its head,—it does a thousand revolting things. Such soulless, green-sward charmers, should never be viewed nearer than in one of Gainsborough's pictures, feeding pigs or rabbits.

At the villa Diodati, during that delicious autumn, we indulged in a thousand chimeras, theories, and fantasticalities of this description. We rowed and we rode,—we sighed or were sighed to,—we learnt Italian or taught English,—with all the ardour incidental to the most intellectual companionship enjoyed amid the most exquisite scenery. After despatching to Geneva evening after evening poor Polidori, (who was of an age and features to trouble his head concerning the suffrage of any two or three that

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might be gathered together anywhere, and to fancy that well-dressed people assembled in a well-lighted room, *tale quale*, constituted society,) Byron and I used to go and enjoy ourselves under the canopy of heaven, when there was moonlight; or remain ensconced in a comfortable room when there was not; enjoying our reminiscences and comparative notes of the London world.

Gad! how we talked them over!—the young women who had wanted to marry us, and the old ones we had wanted to unmarry!—The suppers at Watier's, — the dinners at Holland House,—the breakfasts in St. James's Place!—I cannot conceive how Byron, conscious as he was of the deep sympathy of the few, could trouble himself about the antipathy of the many. All the master-spirits of the age went hand-in-hand with him. All the first-rate women and first-rate men despised the absurd calumnies which encircled him, innocuous as serpents hissing round the pedestal of a statue. It was

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only the very silly people whom we paraded for our diversion in the glasses of our magic lantern, who fancied themselves elevated above his head by distinctions about as honourable as the exaltation of a chimney sweep on a gate-post.

Shelley, who was essentially a poet, a man who had kept aloof from the deteriorating vulgarisms of conventional life, was sometimes amazed at the platitudes which derived piquancy in *our* imaginations from associations of which he knew nothing. He would have been shocked, perhaps, but that his mind was endued with the indulgence of true greatness. He was not, however, long an inmate under the same roof; and it was chiefly during his absence that we burnt in effigy the bores and blues of London fashion: for it happened that during the last season we had enjoyed there together, the greatest bores were blue, and the greatest blues, bores,—beginning with Madame de Stael, who, *out* of a book, was as insupportable as others within one. She was

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however so civil to us when we visited her at Copet, that we had not courage to apply the tar-barrel to Corinne; more especially as the mild and intelligent Albertine (the Duchesse de Broglie) was just then her inmate to urge the plea of "*Grace pour maman!*".

Madame de Stael, by the way, madè a first and last attempt to reconcile Byron to his wife; and it was after an interview with her upon the subject, that he flung into the fire the MS. of a brighter piece of prose than had been penned in Switzerland since the desolation of Ferney, though bright with a livid brightness, savouring of the reflection of the flames of eternal punishment. But it is useless for a man to attempt to extinguish the spark within him; and the spirit which had suggested the tale called "The Wife of Belphegor," soon afterwards burst forth in the scarcely less vivid stanzas of Don Juan!

On quitting Diodati, we travelled together to Venice. It is something to have visited Verona, the birth and burial place of Juliet, with the

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creator of Zuleika, Leila, Medora, Gulnare! Everybody knows, who knows a great poet, that poets are the least poetical of God's or the devil's creatures, unless when hanging over a sheet of wirewove, crowquill in hand. However, we really *were* struck by the splendour of the Amphitheatre; and if I did not quite sympathize in Byron's interest in the stone horse-trough, which passes as the tomb of the daughter of the Montecchi, or rather of the daughter of Bandello and Shakspeare, our hearts melted together at dinner that day, over a flask of Monte Pulciano, and a dish of Ortolans, "that might have pleased a dean," or softened the flinty hearts of all the Capulets and Montagues in Verona.

That autumn witnessed the brightest efflorescence of Lord Byron's genius; "the third canto of Childe Harold," "The Prisoner of Chillon," "Darkness," "The Dream," each a *chef-d'œuvre*, had sprung to light during his sojourn at Diodati; as if evoked out of the surrounding glories of nature, like the mighty Afrits conjured by Mau-

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graby out of the recesses of the Caucasus. Manfred was now fermenting in his soul, — immortal Manfred !—No wonder if he became sometimes uncognizant of Cecil Danby.

Once settled at Venice, matters grew worse. The too celebrated Marianna shared his attentions with the Witch of the Alps; and I consequently released myself from the duties of dumbmy; and, leaving him to the undisputed enjoyment of his lodgings in the Spezieria, took up my abode in a grand gloomy apartment of the Palazzo Gritti, on the Canal Grande, surrendering myself a prisoner at discretion to the enchantments, animate and inanimate, of that city of poetical illusions.

Dear reader,—I perceive your consternation. —Do me justice !—*Did* I bore you with Mont Blanc on the shores of Leman, or the Drachenfels, on those of the Rhine, that you should suspect me of an intention to crush you under the weight of the Rialto, during my sojourn on those of the Canalaccio ?—With Beppo on your

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shelf, and (unless you wear a surplice or a muslin frock,) Don Juan hidden behind an edition of Chesterfield's works, Heaven forbid I should inflict upon you so much as the description of a gondola! — Everybody worth speaking of, or speaking to, who ever dipped pen in ink, has had a daub at Venice; Shakspeare and Schiller, — Byron and Beckford, — Lewis and Cooper, — Lady Morgan and George Sand, have projected their shadows on the lagune, — or at least images that *came* like shadows, but have not so departed.

I may therefore very well hold myself exempt from dwelling upon mildewed palaces. Canaletti has shown you all you need to know of the aspect of the spot, —

Where Venice sits in state, throned on her hundred isles ;—

and Prout and Stanfield have added an appendix and list of errata to his pages.

Fancy yourself therefore in Venice. After all the painting and printing of the last three

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centuries, there is surely no great stretch of imagination.

But you must also fancy *me* in Venice,—a good-looking misanthrope, as black in hat, coat, and countenance, as a gondola!—While Byron was polishing his periods or lisping Venetian,—blue Venetian, with Countess Albrizzi, and Venetian *couleur de rose* with Marianna,—

Contemplando, fisso fisso,
Le fatezze del suo ben,
Quel bel viso, lisso lisso,
Quella bocca e quel bel sen,

I went sauntering about, fancying myself into a Pagan in the mosque of St. Mark, and more than a Christian in the church of San Giorgio Maggiore; a pigmy on the *scala dei giganti*,—a giant amid the solitudes of the Lido. I even breathed the sighs exacted of every traveller who respects himself, on the Ponte dei Sospiri; and had serious thoughts of inditing a sonnet to Liberty, after viewing the *pozzi* and *piombi*, but that,

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conceiving Byron would not let slip so golden an opportunity, I judged it more convenient to say "ditto to Mr. Burke."

The tranquillity by day, the vivid animation by night, consequent on the opening carnival, were however anything but favourable to those same metre ballad-mongers, who require a night as silent and solemn as the frost-bound stillness of some northern city; disturbed only by the hoarse denunciations of the town clock, telling the time austerely as that which, in the unfathomable abyss, proclaimeth to the souls in torment that Eternity rules the hour!

I don't know how Childe Harold managed to get on with his stanzas; but, as far as I am concerned, I swear I never felt less romantic than in the city of romance. The lights of the coffee-houses dazzled my eyes, whenever I tried to prove pathetic with Jaffier on the Rialto; and I had not been a month in the place, before I saw as clearly as that Byron was making an ass of himself for love of a linendraper's wife, that I should quit

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Venice myself without so much as the shadow of an adventure. When, lo! one evening, of all the days of the year the festival of St. Stephen,—being that which immediately succeeds the feast of the Nativity,—and nearly of as much account among the minions and dominions of the Austrian house of bondage, I was gondola-ing it lazily home to the Palazzo Gritti; when, on nearing the platform of St. Mark, my ears were startled by the tumultuous joy of the multitude assembled in honour of this popular holiday. The strumming of guitars, the explosion of petards, the shouts of the merry populace, seemed to send their demonstrations gladsomely into the sky,—a far more cheering evidence of affection to the lapidated saint, than all the penances and flagellations borne by poor, foolish, humbugged human nature, in his honour.

Startled by the vivacities of the hour, I determined to alight for a nearer survey of the Venetian commonalty. A crowd in England (as I have some thought of standing for Fins-

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bury, let me beware of calling it a mob !) a popular assemblage in England, is the dullest-looking thing in nature. Its dinginess seems arrayed in sackcloth and ashes; diversified here and there by the diabolism of a chimney sweep, black with the sins and soot of a sea-coal-fire-warmed generation, too selfish to sweep its flues with machinery. In gazing on a mass of this description, one might fancy, indeed, that the House of Hanover ruled over a nation of dustmen.

In Italy, on the contrary, a rainbow in the sky has fewer hues and gradations of hues, than a crowd upon the earth. Nothing of the monotonous dreariness of vesture of the pallid north. Blue, bright as their skies,—scarlet, glaring as their suns,—match with the vividness of the bronzed cheek, coal-black hair, and pearl-white teeth of the aborigines. All is gay and brilliant as a parterre of tulips. The aristocracy of Venice probably assumed its black array to distinguish itself from the parti-coloured garments of the Scaramuccian *οἱ πολλοι*.

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As I stood at the foot of the Campanile, wrapt in my cloak, and fancying I could discern in the frosty air a lingering trace of the incense dispensed by the processions of the day, or emitted from the great portal of St. Mark where vespers were at that moment in course of solemnization, I perceived that the crowd, thicker in my vicinity than at the further extremity of the platform, was attracted by a company of jugglers or posture masters, who were exhibiting their feats, "supported," as we say on the entablatures of our public hospitals, "by voluntary contributions."

I don't happen to care about posture masters or jugglers, or any other privileged distortionists of the human frame. I hate learned animals, or unlearned tumblers, just as I hate conversation men at a dinner party; because they pretend to achieve more than was chalked out for them by nature. I consequently did not so much as raise my eyes over the shoulders of the crowd, to see what sort of feats these wonder-workers were perpetrating. I heard the people shout, as if Cæsar

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were before them, putting aside the crown.—But Lord! what will not the people shout for?—

While I waited there, contemplating for the hundredth time the beauties of the Loggetta, which seemed to gather a new and more romantic charm from the softening shades of evening, like a fair woman peeping through a veil,—musing upon the fall of the winged lion, and other casualties of Venice,—and repeating between my teeth the flight of the French rhapsodist,—

Voyageur, à qui Venise
Se dévoile après le jour,
Si ton âme ailleurs est prise,
Que je plains ton autre amour!
Des Princesses de l'Italie,
C'est Venise, chaque matin,
Qui s'éveille la plus jolie
Dans les fleurs et le satin!

for, having resolved on making my *début* the following night at the ridotto, I was beginning to form surmises concerning Venice in her masque and brocade, even while contemplating the pastimes of the Piazza.

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In the midst of my meditations my ear was startled by an altercation in a harsh jargon, differing strangely from the bird-like sibillation of the Venetian *patois*.

Few things attract my attention sooner than an unfamiliar dialect. To *me*, there is something as mysterious in its influence on the ear, as in that of hieroglyphics on the eye. I fancy hidden treasures of knowledge concealed in its perplexities, — and new developments of sentiment or passion encoiled within its phrases; and though the promise is usually fulfilled, like most of the promises I make my Self, by the discovery that all human tongues serve to convey the same trivialities, and that the words which sounded supernatural as the soliciting of the Weird Sisters, only enabled Jack to exclaim, that he was hungry, or inquire after the health of Gill, the same feeling would be renewed, were I at this moment in the centre of a circle of Tschusans, — hearing them and asking them questions.

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I was roused from my reverie to wonder what these two squabblers on the Piazza were quarrelling about. One of the voices was rough as the coating of a pine,—the other, sweet and unctuous as its kernel;—for I speak Zecca-larly of the pines of the forest,—not Bond Street-wise, of those of the succession-house. The contra-basso was that of a "salvage-man," a hard-looking, masculine fellow of forty,—Saracenic in beard and proportions,—arrayed in a pale-blue jerkin, with white trowsers and a shaggy sash of red silk, twisted round his middle;—while the girl he was addressing, a fragile-looking thing, light as an antelope and flexile as a cane, was attired in a yet more fanciful costume;—a spangled, close-fitting bodice of green velvet,—her black hair braided Albanian-wise, and falling upon her naked shoulders; while muslin shoes and trowsers of ample fold formed her sole defence against the nipping air of a Christmas evening. The case was clear;—these people were part of the company of funambulists.

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The dispute ran high. The girl kept retreating towards the foot of the Campanile; and the man,—evidently the master,—following her with what sounded most barbarously like menaces and imprecations. If mistaken in the meaning of his spoken accents, I could not be in the expressive idiom of the foot that stamped on the pavement, or the swarthy fist that clenched itself in her face. Still less could I misinterpret the gasping sounds, half sob, half groan, that burst from the bosom of the damsel.

To have inquired of either the cause or purport of the dispute, would have been much the same as to ask the question of the granite lions of St. Mark;—but I kept close at hand, determined to interpose in favour of the girl, should it appear advisable. She was shuddering with cold; and the withering effect of the atmosphere seemed to pinch her features and dilate her large dark eyes, orbed with resentments such as ought to have kept the blood circulating in her poor blue cheeks and hands.

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Never did I behold so graceful a creature! Presle or Angiolini might have borrowed attitudes from the instinctive movements of her gracile frame.—Every menace, every impulse that uplifted her arm, was a study. At length, some bitterer word than the rest so excited the fury of her taskmaster, that a brutal blow of his fist almost felled her to the earth. I started forward to retaliate; sure that, however faulty the girl, *he* was fifty-fold more condemnable; when, lo! with the velocity of lightning, she plucked from her girdle a stiletto I had not before noticed among the accompaniments of her Greek costume, and was about to avenge herself in a manner more summary than lawful.

As her best defence, instead of laying low her antagonist, I snatched the poniard from her grasp, and prevented the commission of a crime which would have sentenced to the axe of the executioner the most beauteous head I ever looked on!—

She was about to turn upon me more infuriated

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than she had been against her tyrant, when a huge phlegmatic Schwab of an Austrian soldier, who had witnessed the affray, probably on duty lest upon St. Stephen's-day there should be an uproar among the people,—seized her by the shoulder; adding certain Germanic expositions of the law, somewhat more comprehensible to me than the outcries of the two rope-dancers.

Whenever justice takes people's business into her hands, every human being present begins to talk at once, as if the goddess of the scales had as many ears, as Rumour tongues. In order to enable the animal in the white and blue uniform to lend one of his two exclusively to myself, I slid into his hand as much of his Emperor's particularly base coin as it would contain; and persuaded him, in sufficiently bad German, that I was the only sufficient and credible witness of what had occurred.

The girl, regarding me as an enemy, drew away from me with an intensity of scowl that

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must have disfigured beauty less remarkable than hers; while I gathered from the explanation of the Austrian soldier that these people were *Zigeuner* belonging to a gang of Hungarian tumblers, who had come to Venice from the fair of Trieste, to gather a few sequins during the Carnival ere they returned to their settlement in the Carpathians; that the brute whom I considered the girl's master, was not only her master, but her father, — and that the crime which I had contemplated as assassination, would consequently have been parricide. — The girl still shivered and chattered, not only with her teeth but her tongue; and her words probably conveyed further threats of violence, for the soldier kept assuring her that unless she amended her intentions, he should be under the necessity of conveying her to the guard-house on the Zecca, where, in consequence of the holiday, she would be locked in for the night.

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"Do!" cried she, with clasping hands and earnest eyes.—"Do lock me in for the night. I implore,—I beseech you!"

"Without fire or candle on St. Stephen's day, child," replied the soldier, "is no such treat as you may suppose; — to say nothing of the sentence that might perhaps await you in the morning."

"Better than the fate that certainly awaits me, if left at liberty to-night!"—cried the girl, her bosom heaving with suppressed emotion; "to be starved, beaten, and thrust out here in the cold, exposed to the insults of the boatmen, and all the other brutes who stand to see me harassed and tormented.—I am his daughter; — I know it! — I am bound to work for his maintenance and my own; — I know it! — But it is written 'thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.'—There is no law for the stripes wherewith I am goaded. — I have been toiling since sunrise. — I am exhausted with cold and hunger; while *he*, as you may plainly see,

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has been drinking and carousing.—I told him just now, when he was about to place the lanterns at the corner of our carpet, (to force me to go on till midnight as I have done throughout the day,) that, like other slaves I must have food and rest;—above all, that he must abide by me, lest I should be used as I was last evening on this very spot.—He derided me,—he spat upon me.—Is that like a father?—He struck me.—Is *that* like a father?—He—"

"And you would have dashed your stiletto into my side, had not the stranger yonder prevented you!"—interrupted the man, who perceived that the sympathy of the standers-by was enlisting itself with the oppressed.—"You would have stabbed me!—Is that, I ask you, like a *daughter?*"

"It is like *your* daughter,—for you murdered my mother.—Never deny it!—You murdered her!—Though acquitted for want of evidence, did not the tribunal of Bröny bid you go and repent?"

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"I strongly recommend you to take this girl into custody," said I, addressing the soldier, after watching, as well as the deepening shades of evening would permit, the ferocious countenance of the *Zigeun*.—"Here is my address at the Palazzo Gritto. *I* will appear as your witness to-morrow.—I am convinced that if you leave her at liberty, there will be bloodshed before morning."

"There will, — there *shall!*" — added the girl in her former sweet voice, so strangely at variance with the frightful purport of her words. "I surrender myself your prisoner;—and unless you accept me as such, this night shall see the last of him or me!"—

The fellow in the crimson sash protested, however, vehemently against the arrest; promising to bestow paternal coercion upon the damsel, if left to his care. For a moment, the soldier, whose purpose of enjoying the fiddlings of the *fête* was grievously interrupted by the duties of office, had evidently a mind to com-

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ply. But a crowd was beginning to gather, inquiring, in a thousand Venetian lispations, the meaning of the affray; and the strong good sense of a popular assemblage, not bamboozled by what is called eloquence, is pretty sure to decide in the right. The Gondolieri and their feminine gender, insisted that the girl ought to be taken to the royal and imperial guard-house on the Zecca, and thither she was accordingly conveyed. Her father would fain have followed, but there were her two fellow exhibitors, the learned ape, and the poodle dog who showed tricks on the cards, to be taken care of; — to say nothing of the piece of faded church tapestry which officiated as their footcloth,—the lanterns belonging to its four corners,—and the chest which contained the wardrobes of all four, and served as a stage to the performers. These demanded his paternal and proprietorial protection, quite as much as his refractory child.

I alone, therefore, followed the soldier and the girl.—I even insisted on her being conveyed

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in my gondola; for the populace, at sound of the word "assassin," was crowding fearfully upon her.—When we entered the gondola, instead of taking her seat on the bench, (no restraint being imposed on her by her companions,) she flung herself headlong on the carpet, and sobbed audibly. It was dark. But I could feel her writhing on the floor at our feet.—I began to wish that I had hit upon some less rigorous mode of extricating her from the hands of her despot; and even offered a second handful of coin to the soldier to let me land him on the quay of the Canal Reggio, or anywhere else he pleased, and set free his unhappy prisoner.

But the man told me in good set German that my proposition came too late;—that the wench must be imprisoned that night,—appear before the magistrates on the morrow, and perhaps be sent to work in the Idrian mines before the week was over! He had no longer an election in the matter. Hundreds had seen her

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taken into custody,— hundreds would be ready to bear witness against him, should he fail in his duty.—

On one point I was myself resolved; —that I would not surrender to her the dagger which I still held under my cloak. The temptation might be too strong for that young and impetuous creature, imprisoned in silence, solitude, cold, and hunger, on a winter's night! Time enough to return it to her at the tribunal the following morning.—The soldier who had refused my second gratuity as a bribe for her escape, accepted it as an argument with the sergeant on duty, that she should be gently used, and provided with food and covering in her cell; and Franszetta,—for such I discovered from her father's imprecations to be her name,—so far recognized my care for her preservation, as to seize my hand and cover it with kisses.

There was something in the movement, as she lay there crouching at my feet, so resembling the mute endearments of one of the brute creation,

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that I felt towards her at that moment as one feels towards an affectionate and grateful hound, whose caresses are his only mode of demonstrating his attachment.

After seeing her safely deposited by my friend in the white uniform in the hands of an Austrian Bombadier, who looked like a wooden Goliath, and smelt like a tobacconist's shop,—I dashed into my gondola again, and bad the men make off in haste to Byron's lodgings in the Spezieria.—I knew he was to dine with the Contessa Albrizzi, and conceived that he would meet there certain of her Venetian acquaintance, who might put me in the way of befriending the Signorina Franszetta, by means of more fluent Italian and better law than I could possibly pretend to.—Besides, if the truth must out, I was not sorry to have a little adventure to recount, and a heroine to boast of, in return for the eleven thousand with which he had favoured me in the course of our confidences.

"A tumbler — a gipsy — a stabber in the

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dark,—yet pure as Lucretia, and beautiful as a houri?"— cried he, proceeding with his toilet, while I, with as much embellishment as prose and honesty would permit, proceeded with my narrative.—"Come, come!—you are practising on my ingenuousness; or you have been drinking healths to St. Stephen in choice alkermès in one of the booths of the Piazza!—Assassinate her father, with half the gondoliers in Venice as witnesses of the act?— These things are not done under the leaden mace of Austria!—Even the *Zigeunr* know better. Remember this is the 20th day of December, Cis, my man,—not the 1st of April.—"

Put on my mettle by these insinuations, I chose also to be on my metal. I produced my stiletto. It was a short blade, of the form, though smaller in dimensions, than a Malay kriss.—The blade was of a lustreless complexion, and had a peculiar musky smell, like that emitted by the rattlesnake; and on the hilt, which was of virgin gold, was a single rough

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carbuncle. — Nothing could be ruder than the workmanship of the little weapon. But it looked antique, like one of the early efforts of a tasteful but unenlightened people.

Byron was curious in arms; and he examined this circumspectly, both by sight and scent,— from hilt to point.—

"Tell me in what Armenian armourer's shop you made your purchase," said he, "for I would gladly have its fellow. I have not seen such a poniard since I left the East. I once had one made, almost on its model, for a fair London friend of mine; who has since, I suspect, often longed to send me with it to assist in solving the grand problem."

"I have half a mind to do as much myself," cried I, "as a punishment for your incredulity!— Come with me, however, to-morrow to the police-office on the Zecca, which is closed on account of the *fête* to-night, and you will see Franszetta delivered up to justice, and perhaps assist me in extricating her therefrom."

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That night, I met him at the Fenice, whither he had accompanied Countess Albrizzi and a party of noble Paduan friends; and he still persisted in quizzing me upon my adventure, as if no one but himself had ever swam in a gondola or caught a heroine.

But even I, after spending the night in dreaming of Franszetta,—her grace, her beauty, her arrow-like activity, her impetuous ferocity of character, — even I woke in the morning, almost convinced in my turn, that the whole had been the baseless fabric of a vision.

The dagger lay on my table, in refutation of the suggestion. Again, I examined its serpent-smelling blade, and cabalistic-looking carbuncle; and as I passed my sleeve over both, half expected to see some slave of the dagger start up, in the form of an eastern *genie*, to reprove my unbelief.

There was no time to wait for his appearance! I had slept so long to dream of the wild-eyed Franszetta,—(whose name, by the way, I beseech

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such of my readers as read aloud, to pronounce Franchetta,) that I had brought it nearly to twelve o'clock, — the time for opening the tribunal.

Byron had promised not only to bear me company, but to assist me with the advice and authority of a grave old gentleman in black, who wrote himself *procuratore* or *avvocato*, and was recommended to him by the Armenian Fathers for the care of his secular affairs.—We were both in high spirits,—he, in anticipation of a novel and perhaps exciting scene,—I, in the expectation of a second glimpse of the strange being in whose destiny I was interesting myself, as well as in the hope of overcrowing my companion.

I was not, however, altogether satisfied to exhibit the charms of my gipsy beauty to so accomplished a *conosciatore*. The imaginative wildness of eye and gesture of Franszetta could not fail to enchant a man with so much music in his soul. Still greater would be the fascination of her reckless desperation,—of her wayward

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humour.—Byron was attaining that epoch in the life of a sinful son of clay and clubs *blasé* with the softer pleasures of the heart, when nothing is so exciting as the turbulence of a virago. It was not long afterwards that Margarita Cogni obtained an ascendancy over him by smashing looking-glasses, and pulling his raven curls till he roared again, in their lovers' quarrels.

I had a presentiment that Franszetta would become his idol; and my mien was grave in proportion to my fears, as we ascended together the stone steps of the police-office, to which the double-bodied eagle of Austria was affixed, like a bird of prey to a barn, by way of warning to addle-headed birds still on the wing.

There stood the soldier,—there the sergeant. —There sat the official in his black silk robe.— There lay before him an open book, containing his registry of committals. In every corner of the office lurked the smell of tobacco, and the dirty dogs of *sbirri*, by whose garments and

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head-gear it was emitted. But in the way of female prisoner, as the French say, — *pas plus que sur ma main !*—

Byron laughed heartily; and, but for shame, I could have as heartily cried. The Signor Dottore, meanwhile, who wore as solemn a countenance as if "from Padua,—from Bellario,"— took the wiser course of interrogating the wooden sergeant and his equally stolid witness, the soldier. It appeared that on the preceding night, Franszetta had been locked into her cell, wherein was a rug-bed for the use of prisoners, and the provisions I had bespoken for her, together with an iron lamp, for which irregular and illegal enjoyment she was also indebted to my gratuities.

In the morning the lamp stood there, untrimmed,—the supper untasted,—but the bed not untouched; — for the sheet was found attached to the stancheons of a window, grated in proportion to the ordinary dimensions of prisoners in guard-rooms, and not purporting to shut in a fairy or a rope-dancer. The inner frame of

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the window was broken; and there were ensanguined traces on the glass and sheet, as if the enterprize had not been achieved without difficulty.

But *had* it been achieved?—*had* she escaped? —The chamber from which she had made her attempt was on the third or highest floor of the old guard-house of the Zecca, abutting against the canal. The street reached only to the stone ledge surmounting the rustic basement; and from this height she must have sprung into the canal, or have crept along the ledge with a degree of skill and intrepidity worthy of Fenella!—

Byron suggested that not even a cat could have done it; while the soldiers swore as stoutly, that by dropping into the canal in the dead of the night, at such a degree of cold, she could not have intended escape, but suicide. One thing was clear, — that the course of justice was defeated,— that the prisoner was gone, — and my sole consolation lay in the fact, that before we quitted the royal and imperial police-office, the brute with

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the Saracenic physiognomy made his appearance, growling and blaspheming at the announcement of his daughter's disappearance;—a plain proof, that whatever evil had betided her, she was not in his power.

The fear of being laughed at, which operates so disgracefully upon our actions in this weakest of worlds, prevented my following up my inquiries as I wished to do, and perhaps ought to have done. I had quizzed Byron so unmercifully about his passion for the linendraper's wife, that I felt satisfied he would cruelly retaliate upon mine for a mountebank, if I evinced even ordinary interest in Franszetta's destinies.

So I went my ways home, and pondered upon these things. I have always felt deep sympathy in the gipsy race:—

> Tribe of the wandering foot and weary breast,—

that most peculiar and especial race, which, whether derived of Ishmael or Cain, surviveth in all the countries of the old world, to attest that it

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is not upon the Jews only, the hand of election or reprobation hath set its seal. Independent of the beauty and grace of this strange girl,—independent of the interest attached to her sad position,—I earnestly desired to see her again, in order to interrogate her, as well as my imperfect German would admit, concerning the usages of her people and her erratic habits of life.

I felt, therefore, like a child robbed of its toy, on discovering that I was to see no more of her. But for the stiletto, I should have almost begun to doubt whether I had ever seen her at all. There it was, however, safe within my vest; the warmth of my bosom bringing forth its musky odour, till I could almost have fancied a nest of snakes coiling around me.

Altogether, my mood was somewhat mystical and Hoffmann-ish!—I had heard the preceding night, for the first time, Rossini's opera of "Otello;"—in *my* opinion, the only really serious opera ever produced by that beautiful but essentially unspiritual composer. With the

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exception of a few passages in the "Semiramide," nothing of his ever touched me so nearly. The scene of Desdemona's tapestried chamber in the second act, at the Fenice, was a facsimile of the one I occupied in the Palazzo Gritti; — and albeit no one who knows Venice, where

> Tasso's echoes are no more,
> And silent rows the songless gondolier,

would expect to find a line from Dante conveyed to him by a fine bass voice from the Canal Grande, I confess that after hearing the

> Nessun maggior dolor
> Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
> Nella miseria,—

breathe so touching an interruption to the woes of Desdemona, I felt that I should never pace my dark and somewhat fantastic chamber after the drowsy bell had stricken midnight, without expecting some such mournful ejaculation to startle its appalling stillness.

That day, I dined with Byron at the Pelle-

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grino; and bore at the hands of my friend a series of whips and stings, which he, who made no secret of his susceptibility to quizzing, ought not to have inflicted.—Nay, he was so wondrous witty in twitting me with Mignon, and branding me with the name of Wilhelm Meister, that I was obliged to silence him by declaring that, if I had stolen my love-passage from Goethe's romance, *he* had pilfered from it his opening stanza in the Bride of Abydos; vindicating himself with a protest of not knowing a word of German, when every ignoramus of us was familiarized with the verses in question, by the translation contained in Madame de Stael's clever rhapsody upon Germany.

He was almost angry;—for, sooth to say, we were drinking deeper than was the practice of either; and I was glad to divert his attention from my charge, by bringing forward a favourite theory of mine concerning the said *Lehrjahr*:—that in Mignon and Albertine, the poet intended to typify Celestial and Terrestrial Love,

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just as Shakspeare personified the two extremes of the *Geisterwelt*,— the sylph and gnome, — in the Ariel and Caliban of his Enchanted Island, —a psychological antithesis of the happiest kind.

"Upon this hint he spake;" — and when Byron *really* spoke, I defy any man of sense, in his senses, to do aught but listen!

It was late when I got home from a second representation of the thrilling "Otello,"—of which, however, we heard only a fragment.—But it was a fragment that contained the *Preghiera*, the "*Sono innocente!*"—the "*Perfido ingrato!*"— —and the catastrophe; and which consequently

Sent the hearers weeping to their beds.—

I repaired to mine, not weeping perhaps, but shuddering — partly with cold,—partly with discomfiture.—My last charge to Berto (a burly Fiessian who served me as gondolier and groom of the chambers,) was to pile up the fire-place with logs, to cheer me through a night which I felt was to be sleepless.—My mind seemed

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in a state of somnambulism; — my pillow only redoubled my sense of restlessness. — With the desperation of all nervous persons, I left my curtains undrawn, that I might command, as I lay, the whole extent of my chamber, and admire the design of its tapestry, whereon was expressed, with becoming sadness, the death of Adonis, exhibited in his last agonies giving up the ghost in the depths of a wood gloomy as the pine-forest of Ravenna.

Right opposite to my bed, whose venerable draperies were of dingy velvet, graced by a vallance of old Venice point,—stood a huge mirror upon an old-fashioned toilet-table, — Venetian also, both in point of point and of glass; — and to the right of the bed, at some twenty paces betwixt it and the mirror, a table, whereon, previous to betaking myself to rest, I deposited Franszetta's stiletto.—

I was in the strangest mood of mind.—All the bewilderments that wine, music, and romance introduce into the interstices of a somewhat

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spongy brain, were seething and fermenting in mine.—I was possessed by that demon of Doubt which seems suddenly to subdue the mind, and deprive all things, earthly and unearthly, of their stability. Every object, in and out of nature, became suddenly a matter of inquiry and misgiving. The society of Byron usually operated upon me like a dose of opium, — *not* as a narcotic, — but the origin of a trance wherein the body becomes transfixed while the soul acquires preternatural activity.—

In just such a state of *clairvoyance* was I now !—My spirit " o'er-informed its tenement of clay." I began to see or imagine those things in heaven or earth, which in Horatio's philosophy were undreamed of. Before my mind's eye flitted the forms of the trembling Desdemona of the Fenice ; — of Mignon, out-Mignoned by the busy fancy and fervid eloquence of Byron ; — and of Franszetta, as she stood on the platform of St. Mark's, rage flashing in her eyes, and the stiletto flashing in her hand !

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The atmosphere seemed instinct with aërial beings to my nympholeptic and delirious fancy.

The night was bitter and cutting as the Arctic Circle or a conjugal retort, — and cheerless as it was chilling. But for the crackling of the fire upon the hearth, I could scarcely have borne the sad wailing of the wind, driving showers of sleet against the windows, — seeming to sob at intervals, like the moans of a soul in torment. The very tapestry was heaved from the wall by these searching gusts. — Everything looked portentous. — Everything sounded like an omen. — The very bell of St. Mark's, as it struck the hours, had an appalling vibration that night, as if conscious that evil was betiding!

I was beginning to feel that even the chirrup of a cricket on the hearth would be a comfort to me, as token of the presence of a living thing, —when, lo! — right across the mirror on which the brightness of the fire-light was reflected, flitted a shadow,—*the shadow of a human form!*

In our conversations at Diodati the preceding

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autumn, our little circle of illuminati had so often indulged in daring speculations, touching the world of spirits, (speculations that gave rise to Byron's fragment, Polidori's Vampire, and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein,) that I own I indulged a little in the superstition reproved by St. Paul.—I am not ashamed to admit my weakness.—People are fond of attributing such imaginings to scepticism, as if the reappearance of the dead were not an especial article of Christian belief. For my part, I hold with the highest of all authorities, that Fear is the beginning of Wisdom; and that those who begin by deriding the spilling of the salt, will end by mocking the overthrow of the altar!—This is not a pure excuse for my own frailty. I do not blush to admit that, at sight of that passing shadow, my breath came as short as that of the lover of Honoria, as he stood, horror-struck, in the demon-haunted forest!—

My second thought, or rather my first,—for some seconds elapsed before I had courage to

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think at all,—was that some person was concealed in my chamber. My next impulse, to start up, and rush to the table where lay the stiletto of Franszetta.—

It was gone! —

Though certain as I lived, that the last thing I had done after Berto's quitting the room and my bolting it for the night, was to place it on the table, from which I had scarcely since withdrawn my eyes, — it was no longer there! —

I was now assured that some one was in the room, probably with a murderous purpose. — Yet, instead of proceeding to an immediate examination, by beating the curtains, the draperies, and the angles formed by one or two ponderous cabinets, I contented myself with taking from the latter my pocket-pistols, which, after Byron's fashion, I kept always charged; — and laying them beside me on the bed, to which I retreated. By lying quiet, I might encourage the miscreant to come forth and meet his fate.

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The bed I must tell you, dear reader, — as you may never have happened to be a lodger in the Palazzo Gritti,—stood in a recess, with a space around it to admit the passage of a servant. Between me and the wall, therefore, was an ambush. The curtains were drawn.—I had perhaps only to tear them aside, and discover the ferocious eyes of an assassin glaring upon me. Yet I refrained!—I felt as if acting under the pressure of supernatural agency.—I kept my eyes fixed upon the glass, expecting to see the shadow traverse it as before. But though I strained them with watching, nothing appeared.—I fancied, however,—so full of fancies does one become in situations of this kind,— that I heard the breath of a concealed person,—nay, a sigh, —a deep sigh uttered so close to me, that I was able, as it were, to *feel* the invisible presence!—

There was no bearing this.—I was about to snatch up the pistols that lay on the bed, and discharge one of them by way of warning; —

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when, lo! on extending my hand,—*they were gone also!*—

Great God!—what was the meaning of all this?—Was I losing my senses,—or was I about to lose my life?—It was useless to affect bravado. It would only hasten my fate, to rush forth, detect, and challenge my enemy. All I had to do, was to recommend myself to Heaven,—not tremble if I could help it,—and be as still as death!—Still enough, perhaps, I was destined to be, shortly!—

Some five minutes elapsed, which my agitation converted into twice as many hours, when I became convinced that the respiration which I still distinctly heard, proceeded not from behind the ponderous curtain, by which the sound must have been stifled,—but from the open side of the bed.—

My immediate impulse was to thrust forth my hand.—As instantly did it encounter an object,—a clay-cold cheek,—the touch of which thrilled through my frame like a bolt of ice!—

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The fleckering fire-light at that moment threw up a tongue of flame; enabling me to perceive a female figure, seated upon the velvet hassock that lay beside my bed, to enable me to climb into its lofty altitudes; — a female figure, of exceeding loveliness!

I beseech my reader to cry aloud, in the eager tone of Mrs. Siddons in Lady Randolph,—

"WAS IT ALIVE?"

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CHAPTER II.

And then she gaily wandered through the world
Wherein her fancy led her, and would stray
(The sails of her bright meteor wings unfurl'd)
Through many a populous city, and survey
The chambers of the sleeping; oft she curl'd
The locks of young chaste maidens as they lay,
And lit new lustre in their sleeping eyes,
And breathed upon their cheeks the bloom of Paradise.

MOULTRIE.

Τις δ' οιδεν ει ζην τουθ' ὁ κεκληται θανειν,
Το ζην δε θνησκειν εστι;—EURIP.

Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
Nocturnos lemures, portentiaque Thessala.

HOR.

PROSY people, a race against which I entertain what Beckford (in speaking of the antiquary who talked him to death about the under drain-

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age of the amphitheatre of Verona,) calls "a capital aversion,"—people, I say, who are habitually prosy, are sure to select some moment when one's heart is on tenter-hooks, to achieve the slow winding of their ball of cotton. Just when we have made some agonising discovery, or are expecting the consummation of the event that is to complete our happiness or plunge us into irremediable woe, in proses the bore, with a long-winded story about nothing,—causing us to send him, by mental execration, to a spot whereunto, the best railroad going, would require half a dozen ages for his conveyance!—

No doubt my readers are at this moment favouring *me* with a gentle apostrophe of the same amiable description. People say, "I wish you were at Hanover!"—or "go to the devil!"—as if synonymous. Lest he who holds my pages in his hand should utter any such terrible denunciation, I cut short a very interesting article upon apparitions and spectra, which I had intended to insert at this place, to heighten the interest, and

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by what the Yankees call "piling up the agony," prove that I am a tolerable dab at fine writing,—a species of composition good only "*al dilettar le femine e per la plebe.*"—But it shan't be lost. I will give it a head and tail, and send it to "The Monthly Chronicle," where heads and tales are always in urgent request.

Where was I?—At the clay cold cheek methinks, or rather at the death-like chill which congealed the very marrow within my bones, when I discovered the strange motionless figure stationed at my bedside. Certes the apparition had taken no *very* alarming shape, being that of a fair Venetian; not of *bel sangue*,—not a *nobil dama*,—not a Mocenigo, or Gradenigo, or Albrizzi, or Benzoni, or Grimani, or Balbi,—but one who would call herself "VENEZIANA!"—and think it title enough, if her costume did not sufficiently announce her to be a child of the Lagune.

I had been only a month in Venice,—a month devoted to its churches and palaces, its Titians and Giorgiones, rather than to pursuits likely to

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expose me to assassination from a female hand. I had loved nobody and consequently nobody had a right to hate me. But perhaps the *fazziolo* might be a mere decoy?—The pistols and stiletto might still be in the hands of an accomplice!—

This notion vanished in a moment as the figure, turning slowly round, disclosed to me the beautiful features of FRANSZETTA!—Franszetta domiciled in my house,—at that hour,—cold,—sad,—cheerless.—The welcome I offered sufficiently expressed my sympathy.

"No nearer, 'celenza!" cried she, recoiling from my advance, and brandishing her weapon in a style almost as resolute as she had displayed the preceding night on the Piazza. "Should I be here, think you, but that I know myself capable of self-defence?—Lie quietly down.—The night is cold, as if man and not providence had made it.—The Euganean hills will be white before morning. But blessed be God, we have a good roof over our heads.—With your leave, I will throw on another log; and then resume my

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place here, and say out all I have to disclose: for I would fain retain my confidence in your goodness. Such frankness of soul and speech as mine ought to beget honest dealing in return."

"Quick, quick, then, with the fire!" cried I, "for I have a thousand questions to ask, touching your escape last night, and the means by which you effected your entrance here."

"Neither exploit is much to boast of," she replied, obeying my behest, and after despatching her task, resuming her seat on the hassock. "It needed only for your domestics to keep as careless a watch as their master, who, with his eyes fixed just now on my stiletto, suffered me to snatch it from the table unobserved."

She took the poniard from her bosom as she spoke, and pressed her lips to the blade, passing it along them with a slow and tender movement, as we caress that which is dearest to us in the world.

"It was to claim this of you that I came,"

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said she. "Before this hour to-morrow I shall have quitted Venice. A vessel is sailing for Fiume. From thence, I will push my way back into our country, under the guidance of some of our own people,—who, in Istria and Dalmatia, have settlements in almost every village. But I would not depart without my stiletto; no, no! I would not go without my stiletto.—It is all I can call my own in this world.—It has been my friend in danger, my friend in desolation. It was the dying gift of my poor, poor mother.—Admit, 'celenza, that I could not leave Venice without my stiletto?"—

"It were more gracious if you said you would not leave it, without seeing again one who has shown such eager dispositions to befriend you, Franszetta!—" said I, reproachfully.

"I should lie were I to pretend that gratitude had any share in my visit," she replied, with provoking calmness; "and when I hazard a falsehood, I do it so awkwardly that a child might detect me. But why lose our time in

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mutual compliments? — I want you to tell me exactly what passed to-day at the police; whether they supposed me drowned or rescued; —and what manner of threats were uttered by my father?"—

I told her all. I described, with as much fluency as my halting German would allow, the unconcealed rage, not of the parent who had lost his child, but the juggler who had lost his apprentice.

"You are a shrewd guesser!" cried Franszetta, almost with a laugh. "As far as his love reacheth, it were indifferent to him to leave me at the bottom of the canal, or on the stones of the quay. In his heart he loathes me. No wonder. When a child loathes its parent, there must be loathing in return. And I hate him! —*Yes*, I *hate* him!—And Heaven will forgive me the sin,—for my mother's blood is on his hand!"—

"*Poverina!*"—said I, directing towards her an involuntary glance of pity.

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"But the ape, and Grelotte, and I, between us, earned him two hundred scudi at the fair of Trieste," continued Franszetta, resuming her usual tone, "and he expected to have done as much more with us at Verona. We were then to have pushed on to Milan,—and so home, across the Tyrol, and Styria. But this time, I was beforehand with him!—I could stand it no longer. I have to thank *you*, 'celenza, for saving me from embruing my hands in blood; for after that, I fear, even Fridszin would not have forgiven me."

"And who is Fridszin?" said I, prepared by her manner of pronouncing the name, for the answer that was to follow.

"Fridszin is my lover," said she; "my husband soon,—if I can accomplish, in safety, the long and terrible journey before me. We are *Zigeuner*, 'celenza,—that much you know already. There are many such in the country where I saw the light. The Hungarians of the Krapaks call us Tsigàny,—Cigany,—and give

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us a name at least, though they allow us neither hearthstone nor rooftree !— The hut in which I was born at Bröny, is an excavation in the sand-cliffs, near Kremnitz,—part of a large settlement,— one of the largest in Hungary,— and favoured with higher advantages; for our people are attached to the Imperial mines."

"And is Fridszin a miner?" I inquired, eager to enjoy again the melting intonation with which she had pronounced the name she loved.

"He is not so favoured," replied Franszetta. "To be a labourer in the gold mines, you must be a born vassal of some magnat. Fridszin is a poor orphan lad, who works in the Imperial glass manufactory, at Bröny. We used to play together when children; rolling and sporting together in our tattered garments on the greensward, and sharing all that is assigned by Providence to the enjoyment of all,— —the blue skies,—the clear waters,—the fields, —the flowers,—the summer weather; and as we progressed into the cares and labours of life, our

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hearts grew together into love, as branches of the same tree bear flowers at the same moment. I loved him very dearly before I knew it; and after I knew it, (for the moment he asked me the question, I discovered my secret,) I felt only the prouder of loving one to whom I was so dear. I knew how to value the happiness of being loved;—for all spring and summer,—(poor child of misery that I was!—) I was forced away from home, to wander from fair to fair, and town to town, with Grelotte and the ape; and I swear to you, that my father cared no more for me, and tended me no more than he did my two companions;—nay, less!—for when the ape was sick, he was anxious,—saying the beast was too delicate for the rude climate of Hungary; whereas, when aught ailed *me*, I was left to grow well again as I listed. —Right glad was I, when poor Grelotte, who had been reared with me, used to come and lie at my feet of nights, and lick my hands at my waking.—I weary you, 'celenza!—I want

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you to know why I so love Fridszin. I want you to know that, during those dreary nights and comfortless days, it was my solace to think that my poor mother was not lonely during my absence, but that Fridszin laboured to make her life easier; always in and out of the hovel, —devoting his leisure hours to work for her, and be unto her as a son."—

"For which good deed, a grateful daughter plighted her faith to him in return!—Was it not so, Franszetta?"—

"Would you have had me regardless of his devotion — *his*,— the kindest and truest of human beings!—Yet, my father hated me for what he called my poorness of spirit; Fridszin being but a poor friendless boy; while *I*, he said, possessed means of acquiring riches for myself and those belonging to me. So much the better, I thought, whenever I thought of Fridszin! — But what was worse than hating *me*, my father used to revile my mother for having sanctioned our affection;

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and so the older I grew, the wider was the breach between me and him who had the privilege of inflicting punishment upon me, heavier than I could bear. It was all this," continued Franszetta, in a more resolute tone, "that made a woman of me! — I am but a child," said she, suddenly extending towards me her slight delicate hand and arm; "you perceive that this is the limb of a child,—yet, I have the heart and soul of a lioness!"—

"The ferocity of one!" cried I, laughing. "Children do not stab, my pretty Franszetta. Children do not swim a canal, in the dead of night,—or clamber up through the window of a Venetian palace—"

"Into a young man's bed-room. — Say it out!" continued Franszetta, coolly. "What I have courage to do, I have courage to hear repeated; and my conscience is so clear on both points, I have so little fear either from myself or you, that I give you leave to say your worst. A kinder thing were to curb your

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mocking humour, and listen.— For the night advances, 'celenza! — Perhaps you want to sleep?"—

I assured her I had not the least disposition to close my eyes; but was careful to avoid irritating the wayward creature by a single expression of kindness.

"This is the first time," said Franszetta, suddenly starting up from her cushion, and gazing round her with wonder and delight, — "that I was ever in the sleeping room of a Palazzo! — I have been called in to courts and halls, at Pesth, at Presburg, at Trieste, at a hundred places, to amuse the poor, listless, gaping nobles, with my feats of activity; and to judge by their rapture at my tumbling, or the antics of Grelotte and the ape, they must lead a dreary life! — But beyond their fine clothes, and menials in gaudy suits, or the pieces they flung me in payment,— what knew I of their ways? — Nothing in their cold, colourless existence tempted me. If such

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be the dreariness of the rich, God keep me poor!"

The language in which Franszetta conveyed these ideas, was of somewhat higher tone than all this common-place. But I was absorbed in the contemplation of something more picturesque than even her language; namely, her singular buoyancy of figure and elasticity of step, as she flitted round the apartment, verifying by her touch the nature of the objects it contained,—the hangings, the tapestry, the books, the various glittering objects scattered upon the toilet-table. But no sooner did she find herself opposite the large swing-glass, to which I have before adverted, than her delight became ecstatic. It was probably the first time she had seen the full reflection of her own fair person; for she stood there a moment, transfixed, then broke into gestures and attitudes, each of which might have served Canova as a study for a new Ballerina. I never beheld anything more remarkable than her power of com-

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pressing her pliant form, cowering, as it were, into a ball; then, suddenly recovering her grace and vivacity, assuming a succession of postures stolen from some yet undiscovered treasury of nature.

She seemed to lose all thought and recollection of *me*, or where she was, or what had brought her there; and give herself up to the enjoyment of her calling, and admiration of her own feats and graces, of which she was for the first time an eye-witness. There she stood,—sometimes poised on the point of a single foot, her delicate white arms tossed gracefully above her head, in a *pose* that a Bayadere might have envied; the light of the fire shining fitfully upon her figure and its reflection in the mirror, so as to impart to both an appearance equally unreal;—and there I lay,—my breath suspended,—wondering whether the whole scene were not the fantastic coinage of a dream, and satisfied that by attempting to ascertain its reality, I should drive the reckless Franszetta to some desperate act. All I

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had to do was to wait the issue as she chose to construct it.

The stiletto was in her hand; and she seemed to take especial delight, as she brandished it in the rapid movements of a sort of national military dance, to watch the flashing light caused by the reflections of the fire upon its blade, and of the blade upon the mirror. After all, there was more of the child than the woman in her antics and perceptions. She could not have numbered more than sixteen years. It was in wilfulness only she was a woman.

At length, panting and exhausted, she flew back to the bed-side,—flung herself on the cushion,—and threw back her head to rest upon the coverlet; so as to afford me a full view of her laughing face, brightened by exercise, and excited by the triumphs of her skill out of all recollection of her sorrows.

"How warm it is here,—how soft,—how tranquil,—how bright,—how happy!" cried she, as if pursuing her previous train of reflections.

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"How different from the biting air of the Canal Reggio last night,—how different from the smoky cavern of our home at Bröny!"—

"But were such a residence as this your own, *Liebchen*," said I, "you would scarcely find amusements in tumbling and pirouetting all night, when reasonable people are in bed and asleep?"—

"Perhaps not," she replied, with quiet self-possession; "for then, I should be a *dama*,—living here with my lord;—not the affianced wife of Fridszin the *Zigeun*, and sworn upon my mother's dying bed to be a faithful one. My poor mother!"—she exclaimed, the expression of her mutable countenance changing in a moment. "Oh! if you knew how precious her memory is and ought to be to me!—I told you before, 'celenza, that she was murdered!—The monster from whom you rescued me last night, felled her to the ground with an axe, as she was pursuing her household labours by her own hearth-side; merely because she insisted on keeping me with her now that I was a woman grown, instead of

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seeing me dragged from fair to fair, and shown for hire, within hearing of things to which no woman's ear should hearken, and exposed to perils more fatal to woman's happiness than steel, or wave, or cold, or hunger. He killed her, 'celenza. —I saw her fall!—I bore her poor body to the miserable bed, where I and my little brothers had been born to her;—miserable bed,—where she had shed her bitter tears in silence when I was absent, and where sleep was vouchsafed her only because those who labour hard from sunrise to nightfall, must find rest at last.—There she lay,—writhing like a crushed snake,—her life-blood ebbing away;—my little brothers kneeling at a distance on the floor,—not daring to approach, lest they should be wet with her blood;—nor to hasten to the factory after Fridszin, as I bad them, lest they should encounter by the way the desperate man, who, after murdering his patient, humble wife, rushed out into the darkness, in a mood to kill and slay, for very madness!—

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"I saw her die, 'celenza,—die slowly and in torment;—for how could I assuage her sufferings?—I, a poor ignorant girl of fifteen!—Shall I tell you what she said to me, during the two miserable hours I hung over her?"—

"Not if the recital distress you thus, Franszetta," said I,—perceiving, as I took her hand in mine, that it was cold as death; while on her smooth forehead were rising dews of profound emotion.

"She said that her life had been a life of bitterness,—of blows,—of toil,—of want,—of woe!—that no sunshine had shone upon her, save from the faces of her children. But that now, she was going to her Maker,—to her exceeding great reward!—'My comfort on this cruel deathbed,' said she, 'is, that my soul is pure from stain,—that amid all my trouble, all my weariness, vice never found a crevice to enter my dwelling.—Wherefore I know that I shall rejoin my mother and my God, in a land where there are no tears,—no trials!'—And then, 'celenza,—

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then,—as I tried to stanch the blood welling from her wounded throat, she uttered charges to me, too sacred to be breathed by any voice in any ear, save by a mother's to her daughter's; and bestowed upon me her dying blessing, and the stiletto which her dying mother had with her benediction bestowed upon herself,—an Eastern relique of our tribe, who, they say, are from the land of the Saviour. Only a minute before she died, she bad me be an honest wife to Fridszin, as she had been to him who was sending her to her grave,—if I had hope to meet her in heaven with the love and trust we had shared together on earth!—And when I leant down, 'celenza, to kiss her poor lips, in token of my solemn pledge in life and death to obey her, —the breath was gone forth from them!—I had no longer a mother!—only the holy commandments she had given me,—and the poor, bruised, bleeding body, which had sacrificed all to keep me spotless with a spotlessness like hers.—Oh! surely—surely—the angels of God must have

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taken to their charge so bright, so true a soul! —

"And now," cried Franszetta, starting up, after a pause of deep emotion, during which her thoughts appeared to be absorbed in inward prayer, —and, standing erect upon the floor, with her arms crossed over her panting bosom, and her brows wearing an expression of mingled anguish and intelligence impossible to describe,—"and now, 'celenza, tell me whether, with this poniard in my hand,—this heart in my bosom,—I have aught to fear from being alone in your chamber at midnight?"—

"Nothing,—nothing!—Compose yourself!—" said I, awed by perceiving the veins upon her temples swollen with emotion, and her whole frame tremulous, as with the passion of a Pythoness. "Sit down again, Franszetta, and tell me gently what has since betided you, and what are your projects."

"It was spring-time when all this chanced," said the girl, her voice sinking again into a

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desponding murmur; "for I remember that when I went my way at day-break to the high bailiff's at Bröny, to call upon the authorities to bury the dead and deal the rigour of their laws upon the murderer, as I hurried along the green turf bordering the road, I trod upon the first primroses of the year. I saw their pale stars even through my tears; and so long as I live, and so dearly as I love the spring, shall never look with pleasure upon those flowers again! —

"'Celenza! — they buried their dead — but they dealt no justice on the living! — None had seen the blow. Even I and my little brothers knew only that we had found our mother bleeding on her hearthstone,—the door of the hut open, all in disorder.—All to which I bore witness, as having heard from her lips, they rejected; for the laws of Hungary discountenance so monstrous an act as for a child to swear away the life of a parent. But such laws never contemplated the existence of a father like mine! And so, as it mattered little to the bailiwick

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whether there were a *Zigeuner* woman or child the more or less in the world, saving so far as they were troubled with their correction, the tribunal admonished me to go home with my father, and study to be a dutiful daughter to him in his bereavement! — A dutiful daughter to *him!*"—

Would I could convey an idea of the thrill of horror and despair expressed by the gestures of Franszetta, as she seemed to contemplate anew the terrors of such a sentence. — I could almost fancy I was returning with her into the desolate hut, from which the body of her mother had been removed! —

"I obeyed — I had no choice. — I went home, though she was no longer there!"—murmured the poor girl, — making no effort to repress the tears that fell in heavy drops upon her bosom, as she reseated herself by the bed-side. "There was no kind voice to soothe me,—no fondling hand to comfort me,—only the two boys crying beside the cold ashes on the hearth!—But

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there, even there, was the trace of —— oh! God!—my poor, poor mother!"—

Half stifled by her suffocating sobs, a grievous pause ensued. At length, I took courage to inquire of Franszetta, whether her father had ventured, at such a moment, to renew his violence?

"He *dared* not!"—cried the girl; "for he knew that the eye of authority was upon him, and that the neighbours were resolved, on any new act of cruelty against us, to inflict summary punishment upon him. Besides, his bread depended on my skill or his own labour;—and he loved his ease as he loved the *raki* flask. So on our return home, 'celenza, he spoke me fair; and, laying all that had chanced to the score of drink and passion, swore that, if I would pursue my calling as a tumbler only another year, he would place the poor boys in the school of the bailiwick during our absence from Bröny, and at the end of my apprenticeship, grant me half my gains, by way of dowry."

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"And Fridszin?"—said I, interrupting her; "did he accede to this proposal, instead of claiming you as a wife?"

"Alas! 'celenza, on the very eve of my poor mother's death, he was sent off by the commissioners to Vienna, with a cargo from the imperial factory, under escort;—and was not to be back till summer.—He had been chosen at a minute's warning by the director, as trustworthiest of the workmen; with the choice of forfeiting his place, or departing without so much as a word of farewell!"

"Poor fellow,—poor Franszetta!"—

"Even had he been there, what could he have done?—I was a minor,—my father's bondswoman;—and was it likely he would consent to lose me by a marriage with a penniless workman, when so great was my renown, that the Leopoldstadt theatre had bidden money for me, to figure in one of their magic stage-plays?—From ten years old, I had been exhibiting all the summer months at Raab,

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Presburg, Ofen, and elsewhere. My father's business was to frequent fairs with his dulcimer, and Grelotte, and the ape, showing conjuring tricks, and mending stringed instruments; and so long as they were only three, their gains were so small, that he often said he would almost as soon work in the mines or turn the plough, as my mother was ever entreating. But from the moment he thought of carrying *me* with him to display the feats of activity he had taught me as a pastime for winter nights, his copper earnings became silver; and he was in hopes,—more than in hopes,—that as I grew older and stronger, the silver might turn to gold.—You know not all I can do, 'celenza, when the blood is not stagnant in my veins with cold, as it was last night on the Piazza, or my muscles unstrung with hunger; — nay, I know not myself. — There is a spirit within me that sometimes carries me, as it were, into the air: and the flower could no more give you a reason why it blows, than I how I conjure

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up the postures that bring down the plaudits of the standers-by. — They come to me, as my life came, by the will of heaven."

"But since you are thus successful, Franszetta," said I —"whence the abject poverty you complain of? —"

"Because, after passing the day in the square of some great city,—a show to the people till it shames me to know myself a woman, and soon to be a wife,—at night, the bag of money I have worked so hard for, is melted away at the wine-house! — Not a *tratteria* in Trieste or Venice in which that man has not squandered his means, while I was famishing in our wretched lodgings! —Yesterday, you heard me refuse to dance after dark, because the night before, when I had been breaking my very heartstrings to tumble for the sailors of the Zecca, the heavy bag of silver I had collected never so much as entered our dwelling!—Dice and drink emptied it before morning!"—

"You are right!—Such a father has forfeited

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all claim over you!" cried I. "But how, my poor girl,—*how* are you to escape from Venice without his knowledge?"—

"How did I escape from the guardhouse last night without that of the Bombadier,— how arrive in your chamber without alarming your servants?—Think you that Nature has endowed me with such force of muscle and agility of limb, without suggesting them as a means of defence? You, a noble, and bred in enervation and luxury, cannot dream the strength of arm and heart and soul, of one of the people.—You know not of what I am capable!—"

"You are a little miracle, Franszetta,—a miracle of moral courage, as of strength and feeling!—" cried I, with a sentiment of profound sympathy.—"But so young,—so unprotected—"

The smile on Franszetta's lip displayed mingled archness and bitterness.—"Strive and thrive!—" cried she.—"Nothing was ever achieved by moaning.—In these Venetian weeds,

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'celenza, *who* will recognize Franszetta the dancing girl?—Did *you* know me at first, when I sat shivering here by your bedside?—I have flung aside those villanous spangled slippers and velvet jerkin, for good and all!—I would not so much as part with them to the salesman of whom I purchased my *fazziolo*, but tossed them into the canal on my way hither. If words of mine could only say how I abhorred them!—Never shall I forget my sense of loathing when my father took them out of the chest into which they had been thrust at the time of my poor mother's death; and I saw that, from some of the rags thrown in with them, they had contracted stains of blood!—"

"And when do you expect to reach Bröny?" said I, willing to change the current of her thoughts.

"When God pleases!" replied Franszetta. "He permitted my poor mother to be slain in her innocence. It is not always prayer or virtue that obtains the protection of Heaven. But

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that good mother is now among the angels, — and I feel that she will plead for me, — and that it will go well with her child."—

" And when you arrive at home, you will become the wife of Fridszin ?"—

" If he content himself to resign all for my sake, and flee the country. For it would be death for me to await there my father's return. Nay, Fridszin must do more ! — He must carry off my little brothers with us ; for not for my life's sake, would I leave my mother's sons at the mercy of that man."

" But since your labour will scarcely enable you to support your two selves ?"—

" Providence is over all !—If we are in need, a burthen is the lighter borne, the more there are to bear it."—

" At least, Franszetta, you will not deny me my share in the good work. I owe you some compensation for the bitter plunge into the Canal Reggio, to which I condemned you last night."

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"You fancy, then, that I had to swim for it?—Did it never occur to you, that the old Gallician sergeant could be moved to mercy as well as yourself?—Do you hold with my country people that '*Német ember, nem ember?*'—Must you be the only Christian in the world?" —And the saucy girl clasped her hands over her *fazziolo*, and laughed till her white teeth became visible, at my look of stupefaction; in this, as in every other mood and guise, displaying the mutability of a playful child.

Not, however, to dwell too lengthily on perfections that must have been seen to be appreciated in all their rapid changes, suffice it that my contributions towards her travelling-purse were as liberal as my means allowed. Luckily perhaps for my prudence, my treasury was chiefly stored with Hammersly's notes; to Franszetta, about as available as the bill of my day's dinner at the Pellegrino. But in addition to some twenty ducats, I forced upon her acceptance two rings of price, (one of them the gift of my sister

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Julia,) to which she could have recourse on an evil day. All this it was an easy matter to deposit in a little leathern bag which she wore within her girdle, already stored with a few gold coins, — gifts, on various occasions, from magnats and noble ladies, before whom she had exhibited her feats of agility.

"I accept your goodness without scruple, 'celenza," said she, "for I see that you are rich, as well as generous." She had been surveying with wonder and delight the ornaments of crystal and gold displayed on my toilet, belonging to the dressing-case (to which I have already adverted as the gift of Lady Ormington). "You have scattered benefits upon me out of your abundance, nor have they fallen on an ungrateful soil! — I shall bless you on my desolate journey; — I shall bless you when I reach my miserable home; — I shall bless you when I fold my little brothers in my arms; — I shall bless you when I am folded in those of Fridszin; — I shall bless you in my prayers, when I

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kneel upon my mother's grave! — I know not your name — I know not your country. — You have a language which is neither that of Italy, nor Germany, nor Hungary; but your heart seems to inherit from the same fatherland as mine; and *that* it is which makes me speak to you so freely, — without fear of your greatness, — without fear of your riches, — without fear even of your youth and gallantry. — When you appeared so suddenly yesterday on the Piazza, a stranger in Venice, and speaking the language as imperfectly as myself, I hailed you as a protector sent by God and my mother to my defence! — There was something so noble in your air, — so kindly in your voice, — something I seemed to recognise as though heard and seen a thousand times before! — Do you suppose, 'celenza, there are no brothers and sisters in the world, save children of the same parents? — Do you imagine that there is not more sympathy of nature betwixt you and me, than betwixt me and the father who beats

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me with stripes, and would glory in seeing me brought to shame?"—

"I am thankful to you, pretty Franszetta," I replied, "for adopting me as a brother. But thus far it is a brother's duty to warn you: that you will gain little credit in the eyes of men from having passed the night in my chamber: — and that when discovered here in the morning —"

"What care have such as I for credit in the eyes of men?"—interrupted Franszetta, with something of her wild recklessness of the preceding night. — "Think you that a mummer of the market-place can be curious in matters of fair renown, like your *nobil dama*, who goes to the ball of the Cavalchina with her gallant, and fancies that, because masqued from her equals, she is hidden from the eye of Heaven? — No, 'celenza, no! The eyes of my mother, and of Him with whom she abideth for evermore, know that I have done no wrong; — that, were I to die this night, my soul would depart

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from me pure as when it struggled into this world of care! — As for being discovered here, — but no matter! — Sleep in peace, 'celenza. — You are weary. — The embers burn low. — The night draws out. — Sleep in peace! — *I* will watch beside you; and when morning approaches wake you, that you may let me forth before your people are astir. — Sleep, while my benedictions sanctify your rest! — Nay, I will sing you to slumber, as I used my young brothers, when they were restless."

In my desire to hear her lullaby, I pretended to comply with her proposition; and promising myself to remain wide awake, laid down my head upon my pillow, while Franszetta commenced in her own language a doleful chaunt, like the gradual swelling of the wind on an autumnal evening. Never did I hear anything so wild, — so mournful. — It seemed to bring before one the fluttering down of withered leaves, and the gathering shadows of night. — I tried hard to adapt English words

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to the rhythm, with a view of describing it on the morrow to Byron, and the following stanzas were the result of the attempt :—

CHAUNT.

Rest to thy pillow,—rest,—
I watch beside thee ;—
No care shall wring thy breast,
No ill betide thee !—
Love guards thy pillow,—Love,—
The unrepining !—
Heaven's moon is bright above,
Heaven's stars are shining !—
Peace,—peace,—forget,—forgive,—
And be forgiven ;—
That all who love and live
May wake in Heaven !—

Dream of thy dear ones,—dream !—
The past retracing,—
Thy native valley's stream,
Thy love's embracing ;
No sound shall mar thy sleep,
No fears perplex thee ;—
Angels their vigils keep,—
Thy God protects thee !—
Peace,—peace,—forget,—forgive,—
And be forgiven ;
That all who love and live
May wake in Heaven !—

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While thus occupied, in repeating syllables and gathering in the sounds of a dirge sad as a Highland coronach, all seemed suddenly to cease; and Berto was calling upon me to rise, and talking about shaving-water, when I opened my eyes again. — I started up. — I looked on the footstool. — I gazed round the room, into which the sparkling rays of a winter morning were pouring their brightness. — I tore open the heavy curtains intervening between my bed and the wall. —Not a vestige of my midnight visitant !—

" Why did you let her out before you woke me !"—cried I, addressing my attendant, in utter consternation; whereupon Berto, who, from my precipitate movements, evidently thought me possessed, presumed to suggest that I was still asleep, or at least still dreaming.

" But the girl !" cried I; — " the girl who was sitting here beside me when you entered ?"—

" No one was sitting here, Eccelenza !" he replied, looking somewhat demure at such a

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supposition. "All was closed as usual. I entered the room with my pass-key. Now I think of it, the curtains of yonder window were undrawn, and the blinds half open, though I remember well that all was safe when I left you last night. I suppose your Excellency unfastened them."

And again he began to talk about shaving-water.

I was half out of my wits! — Was it in the possibility of things that the event of the night had been an illusion? — that I had *dreamed* of Franszetta's visit, — of her strange history? — If so, would that I could have slept for ever, to retain before my eyes the graceful froward being fluttering before my glass, like some sylph new lighted on a flower!—

Rising in haste, I examined the dressing-case, which we had seemed to open together the preceding night. The ducats were gone,—the rings were gone,—but nothing else.—Though on the toilet-table lay scattered numberless loose objects

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of value, gifts from those towards whom I would not be guilty of the perfidy of bestowing them on another, not the smallest of them was missing! In her mysterious flight, the gipsy girl had taken with her only what was legitimately her own.

It would not amuse my readers to hear recited the oaths I bestowed on my own somnolency, or upon Berto's awkwardness all the time he was ministering to my toilet,— oaths which would have driven O'Brien out of his senses.—I felt convinced I should never behold that bewitching creature again. I had known, from the first, that she must go at sunrise; but I had a few more kindly words to whisper to her. I wished to establish some future medium of communication between us, in case disaster should overtake her; in case, for instance, that on her return to Bröny, Fridszin should not have arrived, or should be unwilling to fulfil his contract.—Ass that I was to fall asleep, because a beautiful girl was singing me to rest!—

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I resolved not to say a syllable on the subject to Byron. I had not courage for the railleries he would launch like a shower of arrows at my head. I dressed myself in haste. It was, at least, some comfort that the wind was directly contrary for Fiume. The frost was severe.—What rubbish one talks in England about the genial skies of Italy!—Out of the Two Sicilies, where is the winter less tedious, or less searching, than our own?—

I had promised Byron to accompany him that day to the Convent of St. Lazarus, where, between the pauses of a dissolute life, he was pursuing his studies in the Armenian language; by way, he said, of a "rock to break his mind upon." Hitherto, I had declined the honour of a morning in this synod of learned Pundits, among whom I should be thoroughly out of place.

I abominate monasteries. Two things peculiar to the cloister, are my especial detestation: the smell of human fustiness,—and the aspect

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of human hypocrisy. The faces one sees in such places, are as much made up in their way, as that of a *petite maîtresse*. Rouge and patches are not the only foreign aids of ornament by which people may falsify their visages. Humility, piety, patience, may sit just as discordantly upon the countenance, as white lead or painted eyebrows! — The soft deprecating voice of an old monk is my ideal of the accents of Satan.

Byron was partial to these Armenian fellows. He, and Lady Morgan, and most other enlightened English who have loitered beside the Rialto, have done their best to recommend the learned recluses of San Lazaro to the favour of the world. With all my affection for B. I could not enter into *all* his predilections!—That cursed bleak ride on the Lido,—the convent in question,—and the linen-draper's wife and family, — seemed to me far less inviting than a Pellegrino dinner, or our box at the Fenice.

We breakfasted together, and proceeded to his gondola. Tita was in attendance; — the

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morning bright. — But my spirits did not respond to the cheerfulness of the hour. Byron was full of mirth. If Father Pasquali, the learned friar to whom he was hastening, could have overheard the confidences of his noble pupil concerning his Opera adventures of the night before, he had probably been of opinion that Byron was quite right to select so severe and sobering an investiture for his faculties, as the intricacies of an Armenian grammar.

Previous to repairing to the convent, we were to leave in person a letter of recommendation I had received from my brother, for Count Mocenigo; and just as we were entering the grand canal, the slackened pace of the gondola attested that something unusual was occurring. Byron swore it was only some raft or fruit-barge,—and called to Tita to push on; — an invitation which procured for us the explanation, that they were taking the body of a young girl out of the water.

" Dead ?"— said I, with some interest,—

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looking forth towards the crowd of gondolas, clustered round the spot.

"Impossible to say, Eccelenza," was Tita's reply. "See!—they have placed her on the steps of the Macenigo palace.—They are feeling her hands.—They shake their heads. *Corpo di Diana!*—'T is all over with her!"—

"It is a poor peasant girl," said Byron, to gratify whose curiosity, rather than mine, Tita pushed towards the spot,—"and beautiful as an angel!—"

At this declaration, I looked again. Two gondoliers were at that moment bearing down the body, to place it in a boat for removal;—one of them, an old grey-headed man,—the other, young and powerful, whose arms were encircling the feet. Both were so placed, with regard to us, that I saw only the face of the old man, and the stalwart form of the young one; and the same idea, at that moment, struck both Byron and myself. What a realisation of the famous picture of the interment in Atala.

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— *There* was Chactas, — *there* the dead virgin they were bearing away to the grave.

In another moment, a cry burst out of the depths of my heart, which suspended the observations of my companion. The sun was upon that mournful group, and a sudden turn of the bearers brought the face of the dead full under its brightness. The reader has forestalled the fatal truth.—That cold, white face,—that raven hair, from which the chilly waters were dripping as they bore her along,—those delicate and slender limbs—*were those of Franszetta!*—

We followed the boat to the Ospitaletto, to which it was destined. We saw the best efforts of art directed towards her resuscitation. In vain!—There were severe bruises,—there were traces of outrage.—The belt containing the money had been torn away,—the stiletto was not in her gridle.—She had not, as I had first supposed, fallen into the water in escaping from the Palazzo Gritti. She had shared the fate of her mother.—The girl was murdered!—

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Could anything have increased my affection for Byron, it would have been the more than brotherly manner in which he entered into my affliction, assisted me in attempting to stimulate the investigations instituted by the criminal tribunals, and joined with me in yielding such poor tokens as the occasion permitted, of respect to the memory of the dead.

Poor Franszetta,—poor high-minded Tsigány! —Little didst thou suppose, amid the girlish drudgery of thy wretched hovel at Bröny, that the noble poet of England, the man whose name was European, would attend as a mourner at thy obsequies! — It was Byron who suggested an inscription for the stone I placed over her remains,—copied from some tomb he had seen at Ferrara:—

FRANSZETTA IMPLORA ETERNA QUIETE!

A long silken tress, shred from her head ere they placed her in her coffin, moist with the chilly waters of the Lagune, is all that remains

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to me as a token of the reality of that most strange adventure!

I never dwell upon the recollection of Franszetta, as a child of clay. She lives in my memory as pure among the pure, because uncorrupted among the corrupt;—an angel with her mother, who is in Heaven! — Eheu! Franszetta!

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CHAPTER III.

The grand Prior of Aviz, shrinking back in his chair, exclaimed piteously,—"I shall never be able to stand this; my eyes would become fountains, and we have had weeping enough lately." So saying, he retired without further ceremony.

BECKFORD.

Εν τῳ φρονειν γαρ μηδεν, ηδιστος βιος.

SOPHOCLES.

BYRON would not hear of my returning to my desolate quarters at the Palazzo Gritti. He protested, that no human fortitude ought to be exposed to so gratuitous a trial. But this arrangement only hastened my departure from Venice. My consciousness of the inconvenience imposed upon him by my sojourn in his apartments in the Spezieria, as well as of

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the restraint which any third person must bring to a course of life like his, determined me to expedite my departure from the city. All its familiar haunts were now accursed in my sight. The Piazza,—the Zecca,—the Canal Grande,—and above all, that haunted chamber in the Palazzo Gritti, were full of Franszetta! —Strange mortals that we are!—The events of eight-and-forty hours,—an acquaintanceship of two dreary winter days' duration,—nay, of less, —was fated to destroy my peace of mind for many ensuing months, and endow me with memories of sadness enduring as my life.

I succeeded in persuading Byron, that the most friendly part he could play by me, was to assist in hastening my journey; and before the middle of the month, was rowing back again from San Giorgio towards Fusina, repeating almost the same words I had uttered at Cintra, seven years before,—that in all my wanderings,—all my pursuits,—misfortune was beforehand with me!—

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I was bound for Rome,—a city of the past, and consequently a place of tribulation,—appropriate sojourn of those who mourn and refuse to be comforted. At first, Byron insisted on bearing me company in my tour. But he had previously pledged himself to Marianna, to remain with her till the close of the carnival; and as I saw that he was doing violence to his feelings and hers by this rupture of his word, I promised to go no further than Florence, till he was at liberty to rejoin me.

For three dreary months, therefore, I remained alone on the Lung Arno, weary of myself and the world; intent only on my lost Pleiad; whom I lamented as truly as if she had not been the affianced wife of another, as well as the most exalted of the children of dust. Even the grave at Cintra ceased for a time to occupy my thoughts so nearly as the one on a desolate island, over-swept by the breezes of the Adriatic, where the spirit of the murdered girl "implored eternal rest!"—

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At Florence, I saw not a creature, and pronounced the place to be detestable. On visiting the city the following year, it seemed to me that a transformation had taken place in every object, animate or inanimate. But when I came to reflect, that on my first visit I had frequented exclusively the thickets of Boboli and the woods of the Cascini, consoling myself by watching the progress of the budding spring, it was not likely I should find much analogy between their feathered choir, and that of the orchestra of Lord Burghersh. Towards the close of April, Byron rejoined me. At the beginning of May, we stood together in the Coliseum.

Things fall out strangely in this *imbròglio* of cross purposes. It had been one of the darling visions of Byron's life to visit — no! — I 'll be hanged if I call it the Eternal City, even in print — to visit Rome. Foscolo, Madame de Staël, Rogers, and a hundred other talkers to whom the world delights to listen, had inspired him with an eager interest in the memorable reliques

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of the antique world;—and now he was there, he allowed himself to be ciceroned to all and everything that classical pilgrims delight to worship. But his heart and soul were brim-ful of the wife of a linendraper; and his chief care, with St. Peter's on one side and the Pantheon on the other, was to enable himself to return to Venice within a fortnight!

Yet such is the vivifying power of genius, that the hurried visit of Byron, rushing from monument to monument,—flying through St. Peter's —glancing at the Apollo,—galloping from the Alban mount to Frascati,—enabled him to add a brighter leaf to the garland of "the Niobe of nations," than the be-laurelling of a whole century of ordinary travellers,—bustling Botherbys,—and maudlin Countesses of Pinchbeck.—

What provoked me most in the pre-occupation of his mind and frustration of my plans, was a fact of which he was himself uncognizant,—that Marianna's influence was declining, and that his devotion was a matter of conscience.

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We are all sad hypocrites to each other,—even those who pretend to live together open-hearted as brothers. Byron affected to be as much in love,—and I, as much in grief as ever; while in truth, he was growing sadly *ennuiéd* with his living heroine, and I, beginning almost to doubt the existence of my dead one. I often fancied that I had only indulged in a dream of Franszetta. But Byron was preserved from any misdoubtings of that description, by the bills of certain Shylocks of the Rialto, for pearls, diamonds, opals, and rubies, which the lady of his love not only accepted, but re-sold, as others have since re-sold the more precious ores of his confiding. He insisted upon going to see three robbers guillotined while he was in Rome, and about to return to Marianna. "Now Barabbas was a robber!"—

There was no occasion for me to leave Rome, because he happened to be hurrying back to Venice, in the vicinity whereof he intended to hire a villa for the summer months; — La Mira,

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—since so celebrated. I remained there as long as, and even longer than is customary for the English to defy the malaria; then went to Sorrento, and from thence sailed for Messina. Sicily had long been as much the idol of my dreams as Rome of Byron's;—a person, for whose taste I have the highest reverence, having inspired me with deep interest in its classical remains and modern enchantments,—its climate, mild as the sighs of beauty,—its gentle landscapes,—its meads,—its valleys,—its Enna,—its Hybla.

Now I have infinite satisfaction in gentle landscapes, meads, and valleys, provided they lie within reach of a city where the *cuisine* is good and the opera tolerable. I knew that in the granary of Italy, corn, wine, and oil were in abundance, and that fruit, which signified more during the dog-days,—that fruit might be had for the picking!—Any man can live on figs and watermelons under the dear blue skies of Sicily. It is only when sinking under the ponderosities of fog and soot, that one cries aloud for the flesh of oxen

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and the flesh of South-downs, to enable one to bear up against the climate. A haunch of venison would be as uninviting at Palermo in the month of July, as sorbets and *pastecchi* at Edinburgh in that of January.

The island, which seems to form a stepping-stone from Africa to Europe,—turning, like some ripe fruit, one sunburnt cheek to the south, and one still immature towards the north,—did not disappoint my expectations. I spent the winter at Palermo. When I returned to Naples, everybody asked me what on earth I had found to detain me there. I told them it was the climate. I shall give the same answer to such of my readers as are bold enough to put the same question. It does not suit me to be more explicit. If any one has any fault to find with my reserve, my card of address lies at my publisher's.

One of the cleverest writers and best-hearted men of my acquaintance, D'Israeli, the younger, once on a time wrote to me — "Youth is a blunder,—manhood a struggle,—old age a regret,"—

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a dictum worth reading, in a letter worth preserving. *My* youth, heaven knows, was a blunder, —my manhood a struggle; and now that I am arriving at old age, (for half a century of coxcombry counts for half as much again as a life of mere vegetation,) the past is beginning to get the better of the future in my affections.

One of the places I most regret, is Sicily; —and certain of those dearest to my recollections, are Palermans. The spot is not endeared to me, like Cintra or Venice, by a grave; —but my reminiscences are only the more mournful. For with Emily and Franszetta abides an atmosphere of perpetual spring,— eternal youth,— unchanging beauty; while in Sicily time has wrought the same cruel triumphs as over myself. The face which was beautiful as an angel's, two-and-twenty years ago, is now that of a mere mortal; and though "John Anderson, my jo John," may be a very pleasing ditty to sing beside one's ain ingle, with one's ain auld wife, a superan-

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nuated Romeo and Juliet, sighing to each other in their grand climacteric like two venerable turtle-doves croaking their fondness, presents to my mind anything but an attractive picture.

> Mutat enim mundi naturam totius ætas,
> Ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet;
> Nec manet ulla sui similis res; omnia migrant,
> Omnia commutat natura et vertere cogit!—

I pass over my adventures the following season at Florence. They are recorded in many a diary, still kept under golden lock and key, and brought out by their lovely inditers on rainy Sunday afternoons, at their country seats; and to give publicity to them in the teeth of their breathing heroines, were perfidy. Besides, Doctors' Commons might prove a bitterer critic than even the Quarterly Review.

Suffice it, that it was in pursuance of one of these Florentine episodes I determined to return to England. One of my angels exacted a promise

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of me to that effect; and though I assured her, (and the event justified my prediction,) that once established among the proprieties of English life and the *surveillance* of family connection, she would be the first to forbid me the house, I felt it a point of conscience to comply.

Another of my prophesies was just as strictly fulfilled. I foresaw that I should abhor London,—its want of graciousness,—its want of cordiality,—its want of refinement. I dreaded the supercilious faces of its fine world,—the petty sarcasms which it fancies into wit,—and its abject fear of committing itself in the eyes of the censorship of fashion. All this turned out as I expected. I looked upon the London exclusives, just as the London exclusives look upon those of New York. Considerable changes and metamorphoses, however, struck me in the aspect of the great Babylon.

A certain classical commentator belauds the memory of a certain Emperor, on the grounds

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that he found Rome clay and left it marble. I had left London, brick, and found it,—STUCCO;—or, as Sir Lytton Bulwer more correctly calls it, COMPO!—This was a step in the march of improvement, though niggling and crab-like. My friend, Sir John Harris, one of the first to greet me on my return, (being as stationary in the metropolis as the grasshopper on the Exchange,) assured me that England had found in Nash a new Vitruvius,—a Palladio the younger;—and though my first glimpse of the pasteboard glories of Regent Street by no means confirmed the decree, I accepted it with all the respect due to the Hephæstion of the great Alexander of Carlton House.

I know not whether my ideas had expanded with much travel; but nothing out of the pages of Tom Thumb ever appeared to me so burlesque as the court and courtiers of the new Sovereign.—Such a be-starred, be-wigged assemblage as it was!—Scarcely a man among

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them that ventured to appear in his own shape or character! They seemed to think, like the beggars who post themselves at the cathedral doors of Catholic countries, that it was indispensable to exhibit some deformity to obtain attention. The rough affected to be smooth, — the smooth, rough. The dandies became yachters,—the sea-captains dandies.—Never did I behold anything so shallow and superficial as even their coxcombry! — On my original introduction to Carlton House, during the favour of Brummell, Alvanley, and that set, there shone on the mill-pond a gloom of sunshine, such as Ruysdael or Hobbima throw sparkling on the dulness of even the least interesting spot. But now, the whole effort of its society consisted in keeping at temperate heat the pulses of infirm Majesty. As compared with the refined and lightsome society of the Continent, it was a structure of coarse Norway deal, profusely worked up with French polish;

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which superficial enhancement, owing to the nature of the material, obstinately refused to adhere.

I could not readily amalgamate with such a circle. Their gaiety and their rationality were as unreal as the laughing or serious mask of the antique stage. "*Leur émulation c'était l'envie, leur goût le dégoût.*" To *me*, the pleasures of the court of George IV resembled the melancholy flowers we scatter upon the pall of departed youth.

I remember thinking, one night when we had been playing the pageant of *la bonne compagnie* not exactly at Carlton House, (which possessed of course something of the grace inseparable from all royal establishments, the charm, namely, of everything and every body being in its place,) but at the showy residence of a satellite, who affected the form without the spirit of the Carltonian circles,—I remember thinking, I say, that were Primrose Hill suddenly to send forth an eruption of cinders and lava, to Herculanean-

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ize or Pompeiify the west-end of London, the year 3001 of the Christian era would wonder hugeously at the vulgarity of our taste and the littleness of our productions!—Scarcely a modern mansion one should like to produce to posterity, as our endeavour to vie with the solid houses of Elizabeth's time, or the grander aspirations of Inigo Jones. As to the thousand nameless trinkets invented to amuse the great babies of our enlightened times, I doubt not our grand nephews will decide that there wanted only an enamel rod for lordly fustigation, to complete the play-box of the grown-up nursery.—

With respect to the wider field of London society, and what are called by courtesy the gaieties of the season, it was still the reign of mobs and staircases;—immoderately crowded assemblies, where the total absence of entertainment within necessitated the getting up a row at the door, to impart animation and variety to the flagging pleasures of the evening. An assembly where no carriage was smashed, would

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have been scarce worth speaking of; while the sacrifice of a fine blood horse, or a coachman or footman carried off on a shutter to St. George's Hospital, conferred real distinction. The greatest happiness of the greatest number was the professed motto of all ball-givers, — a defunct system, upon which may be recorded a verdict of *felo-de-se.*

I never knew exactly what amended our ways in this particular. People ascribe the improvement to the extension of London and its population; and the consequent impossibility of giving visiting lists to your porter, with the sweeping clause of a general invitation.—But such a change would have been progressive; whereas mob-assemblies went out of the world with George the Fourth. An enormous schism arose in society, at the epoch of the Reform Bill. Parties ran desperately high;—political, not fashionable parties, which,—on the contrary, fell fifty degrees.—The Capulets and Montagues of the great world would scarcely meet in the same room;

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and though, the moment the great measure was carried, the effervescence subsided, and Whigs and Tories, recollecting that, like sea and land, there must ever exist a junction between them, re-amalgamated as usual.

But in the interim the revolution was accomplished!—People had discovered the charm of small parties and moderately crowded rooms. Even the insulting term "Exclusives," applied to those who were desirous, in inviting their friends, to secure them from having their ribs broken and their dresses torn from their backs, did not avail to frighten the *grand monde* into a renewal of the exploded system of the bear-garden.

I came to England straight from Florence, which was then what Florence had never been since the days of the Medici; and will never be again, till so rare a combination occurs, as for two English families, of high rank and distinguished accomplishments, to be equally agreeable in their male and female representatives,—as

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was the case with the Burghershes and Normanbys. Agreeable people resident in a city attract agreeable people to remain there as guests. Everything that was pleasant in the way of man, woman, or child, was induced to pause, in passing through Florence, by the charm of congenial society; till beauty, wit, and, above all, *agrément*, a charm superior to either, became synonymous in Tuscany with the word *Inglese*.

A coterie of this description, like most other earthly enjoyments, is best appreciated by its loss. We rarely understand the blessedness of a blessing, till called upon to remember that

> ——Such things were
> That were most dear.

The dull circles of Florence, accordingly, date to this day by the Normanby Hegira, though, at the moment, they seemed to fancy that English plays, and French plays, and Italian operas, were to be everlastingly represented for their diversion, by those upon whose like they ne'er will look again.—

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Even I, though, Heaven knows, that winter was one of the pleasantest of my life, scarcely estimated the charm of those easy, pleasant, chatty *soirées*, till I found my Self jammed into some black hole of a mob in Grosvenor Square, where the conversation consisted in exclamations against the heat, and of wonder whether it would be possible to get the carriage.

Yet London society flattered itself it was just then enjoying a peculiar state of beatitude, The king had been just crowned,—the queen just buried,—and the world entertained a notion there would be a royal marriage,—a Prince of Wales,—a female court,—an everything that the public eye and mind delights to dwell on!—It is astonishing how an event of this kind, nay, even the anticipation of it, operates upon classes of society that seem utterly beyond the pale of its influence; and were the tradespeople of London, and its still-life and spiritless middle classes to keep a social barometer, we should be amazed at the strangeness of the incidents

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which actuate the risings and fallings of Great British quicksilver.

But it is not of King George I have undertaken to write. — Kings have their historiographers, who are paid for praising them. It is without a salary that I have undertaken to commemorate the reign of Cecil Danby, in whose favour Hume and Robertson grant me style to interest the sensibilities of that phlegmatic monster called the world ;—torpid as a boa-constrictor, till some ravenous impulse causes it to spring upon a victim, which it either swallows up, *pour encourager les autres*, or crushes within its fatal coil !—

Having already hinted to my beloved public that my birth was the first event of public note at Paris that followed the assembling of the States General, it will be, of course, ill-natured enough to recollect that, at the coronation of George the Fourth, I must have numbered some two-and-thirty years ! I have observed, by the way, that there is nothing in which people take a

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more malicious pleasure, than in convicting and publishing the respective ages of their fellow-creatures. Allude in company to the natal date of some absent individual, and you will find everybody endeavouring to prove him older than he acknowledgeth. Every stranger is better informed on the subject than peerage or parish register, mother, doctor, or nurse. So accurate do the tatlers pretend to be, that one would imagine every birth a gunpowder plot, which to detect and betray deserved the thanks of parliament.

I am not sure, now I come to think of it, that I did not at the epoch in question affect to be *one*-and-thirty instead of *two*. I was conscious that, henceforward, every step must be downhill. I knew that to please a lady's eye, thirty is the apex of human perfection, —the moment when the mind begins to mellow, ere the body has begun to decay. Thanks, however, to my mother's obstinate adherence to the age of eight-and-forty, and certain errors of date

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which she consequently took care should creep into the peerage, I remained thirty, longer than most men.

To my very great amazement I found that, as regarded my popularity, age mattered not a jot.

It is needless, probably, to repeat that the world contained not a roof wide enough to enable Lord Ormington and myself to dwell together in peace. Antipathy and vindictiveness were strong as ever in both our hearts; that is, I can answer for it that they were strong as ever in mine; and I therefore established myself in a little snuggery in Cleveland Row, to be within umbrella reach of my Clubs, and at a sufficient distance from Hanover Square.

I did not much like the idea of subsiding into "a gentleman in lodgings." When I recalled to mind the cogent advice lavished upon me by Lady Harriet Vandeleur on my *début*, ten years before,—the extreme difficulty she then seemed to anticipate for me of obtaining endurance in so-

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ciety, when backed by Lady Ormington's influence, Lord Ormington's cook and cellar, and my own more than Grecian symmetry of face and form, I could not but perceive the impossibility of making a sensation, now that I stood alone, on means far from princely, with an occasional line of silver perceptible among my glossy curls, and an occasional line of care intersecting my manly brow;—the only "lines on a person of quality," upon which the coteries are apt to be critical.

"Never mind!" said I to my Self,—when I saw him almost out of spirits on ascertaining a few of these particulars from the reflection of an ill-conditioned lodging-house looking-glass, about the size and colour of a cat's eye,—"Never mind, my dear fellow!—There is room for everybody in the world,—as well as for every animal in the ark. You have lost the pretension of astounding—the mere vulgar appetite of boyhood!—Henceforward, you must charm by being agreeable. You were a deuced popular fellow at Naples.

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You were very much liked at Florence. London invariably accepts its favourites upon the strength of their foreign endorsement. It hissed Pasta, till she had been half smothered by the bouquets of La Scala. Be of good cheer,—it will not hiss *you*.—Take courage—clear your throat—look the public in the face!—You will do very well in your way."

Upon this system of philosophy,—this new Soul-ar System,—I prepared myself modestly to fill a secondary place as a stop-gap in dinner parties, and a supernumerary at balls. Judge therefore of my amazement on finding myself super-ascendently the fashion;—neither a stop-gap nor a supernumerary,—but *enormously* the fashion!—I do *not* speak under correction;—I say again,—ENORMOUSLY the fashion!—

I could scarcely make it out,—but so it was! It was not alone that I was invited; I was invited in a manner to make acceptance inevitable. Every man who knows anything, knows there is a peculiar tone which women call into their ser-

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vice when they mean to be irresistible, and which I had never heard addressed to me (in London) before! There are as many ways of saying "we hope to have the pleasure of seeing you on such and such a day," as there are ways of emphacizing the "Do you ride to London to-day?" given as an example of accentuation in that compendium of useful knowledge, Lindley Murray's Grammar.

By the listless tone in which some women address you, by the ungraceful slovenliness of their salutation, it is easy to perceive that you command not the *entrées* to the inner sanctuary of their minds;—that they regard you simply as a piece of the useless lumber encumbering the odd holes and corners of society. But from the moment they impart meaning to every syllable, by the polished earnestness of their intonation, by the intense expression of their eyes, by the smiles dimpling round their lips, by the speaking variation of their attitudes, you discover that they are talking and looking delightfully with all their might; and that *you* must look, too, plaguy

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sharp, or some evil purpose will be accomplished ere you know what you are about, or the lovely sorceress either.

But what could they possibly want with *me*? What evil purpose could they premeditate against *my* peace? —

Cecil Danby, my dear fellow! — for a man of two-and-thirty, thou wert a sad ninny to find occasion for the query!—Did not the peerage set forth in its record of the Barony of Ormington—heir apparent—the Hon. John;—and was it not a matter of notoriety, that the said Hon. John was in infirm health, having issue by his marriage only the Hon. Jane? — Hadst thou not therefore every reasonable prospect of succeeding to an ancient title, with a rent-roll of thirty-five thousand pounds per annum, and as much increase as the thrifty habits of Lord Ormington might have amassed in addition?—Was not such, in fact, the express origin of his lordship's still increasing aversion to thy Self? —

Yes!—such is the extraordinary foresight of

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that shrewdest of all insects, except the ant,—a London chaperon, that I was actually booked among the *partis!* As if it were not vile enough to speculate upon the Duke of This or Viscount That, in actual possession of his dukedom or his viscountcy, the manœuvring mammas of the *beau monde* look into futurity with the eye of a seer or an insurance broker! Were I an earl, with an unmarried but marriageable elder son, and the consciousness of impaired health, I should determine the progress of my decay less by consultations of physicians, than by examining the nature and quality of the notes addressed to my heir-apparent. If I saw the young gentleman placed at table by Lady Winstanley next to one of her daughters, for instance, I should go home and order my coffin.

I *was* placed there. I was invited to her ladyship's pleasant house in Curzon Street, whenever I liked to "drop in." I was pressed to join Richmond parties with them. I was asked to their dinners, both family and formal.

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Now, Lady Winstanley is the lady from whose pocket the following invaluable Supplement to the Catechisms of Pinnock, was handed about at the Clubs, as having dropped one night at Almack's.

THE CHAPERON'S OWN BOOK.

Q. What is the first duty in life of a well-educated young lady?—

A. The first duty in life of a well-educated young lady, is to make an excellent match at the close of her first season.

Q. What constitutes an excellent match?—

A. A peer, or a baronet, with a sufficient rent-roll, constitutes an excellent match. The eldest son of a peer or baronet, whose father does not enjoy particularly good health, constitutes a good match. The second son of a wealthy peer, or a baronet with five thousand a year, constitutes a tolerable match.

Q. At what epochs is a well-educated young lady intitled to pretend to the excellent, the good, or the tolerable match?—

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A. During her first season, she may restrict herself exclusively to eldest sons of peers. On the second, she must include wealthy baronets. Should she be so unfortunate as to survive to a third, she will have to submit to the necessity of an eligible younger brother.

Q. How is the well-educated young lady to discriminate on a first introduction between an elder and a younger brother?—

A. The elder brother is usually quiet, unpretending, and careful of committing himself. The younger brother is better-dressed, better-looking, gives himself airs, and will probably talk nonsense and squeeze her hand, not being likely to be brought to an explanation by her Chaperon.

Q. What course must a well-educated young lady pursue, to insure an excellent match at the close of her first season?—

A. She must look and talk as pretty as she can; but avoid the imputation of being a flirt, by accepting only the attentions of quiet, unpretending young men. Those who

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are better-dressed and better-looking, may be sent to call the carriage while the quiet, unpretending young man is putting on her cloak. But she must anxiously beware of being seen with them in tea-rooms,—or the shrubberies at a *déjeuner*, —or riding in the park,—or coming out of the Opera,—or any other critical situation.

Q. Rehearse the chief matches now extant in Great Britain.

A. England is divided into fifty-two counties. First, Northumberland.

Principal seats.

1. Alnwick Castle,—the property of the Duke of Northumberland. HEIR PRESUMPTIVE. Lord Prudhoe, born 15th December, 1792, in the Royal Navy,—unmarried,—agreeable,—does not waltz.—His grace, the Duke of Northumberland, is fifty-six years of age, and of a robust constitution.

2. Chillingham Castle, the property of the Earl ——.

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'Pon honour, I have not patience to copy out the remainder of this ridiculous document, which was of course placed in my hands by one of the very particular friends of poor Lady Winstanley.

But it was not only Lady Winstanley whose civilities convinced me that Danby was in a critical condition. Three or four more of the most determined Almacksians were on the watch to bag me, if I only put out my nose. I never see a determined elder-son-catcher going her rounds, like an earth-stopper, or the parish mole-catcher, or any other setter of springes, without thinking of the print which adorned the Aldine edition of one of the classics of our nursery in Hanover Square; representing that Mazarin of the fairy tale book, Puss in Boots, in a feigned sleep upon the ground, with his half-open bag baited with parsley, lying on the ground by his side, to catch the foolish rabbits who might stray into his toils.

My own feelings and views on the question

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matrimonial, are expressed in the following *jeu d'esprit*, penned one evening by the Horace, or rather Juvenal, of the day, on hearing the everlasting chirp of a cricket, that haunted my apartment in Cleveland Row.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF GRYLLO;

A FIRESIDE ARGUMENTATION.

CRICKET! who, these three months long,
Hast beset me with thy song,—
Ever restless,—never ranging,—
In thy notes and haunts unchanging,—
Chirping still from noon till night,
Say!—What makes thy heart so light?
Midst the cursed frost and fog
Rendering man so dull a dog,
Prithee, GRYLLO,—whisper me
Thy resource against Ennui?—

GRUMBLER!—quoth the Cricket,—thou—
Sauntering home with aching brow,
Sallow cheeks, and yawns amazing
From the halls whose lights are blazing,
Scents exhaling,—garlands wreathing,—
Music's tones voluptuous breathing,—
Weippert, Strauss, and Collinet,—
Gunter and the devil to pay,—
Beauty drest by Madame Devy,—
Say!—what makes thy heart so heavy?—

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Cricket! — In those scenes of sport,—
Crockey's,— coterie,—or court,—
Hustings, tableaux, or charades,
Steeple-chases, tennis, cards,—
Riding twenty miles to cover,
Skulking back to play the lover,—
Moonlight, cloisters, and romancing,
Waltzing, reeling, country-dancing,
Dicing, drinking, racing, flirting,—
What is it seems so diverting? —

Grumbler! — in my chimney-corner,
Free from bore and safe from scorner,
Blest with *ménage* snug and cozy,
All the joys of life *sub rosâ;*
Cerito ne'er my mind bewilders;
I 've not a pound on Flying Childers;
If stocks look down or bankers smash,
What call have I for ready cash? —
A fig for China! — *Carpe diem!* —
Would every man were wise as I am! —

Cricket! —if thou wert one of *us*,
(The Commons and the Omnibus,)
Pray, how would'st thou contrive to shirk
Egypt, Syria, or the Turk? —
Louis Philippe and his trenches,—
Cheering from the Treasury benches,—
Bonham's boring,—Leader's prating,—
All the stuff they call debating? —
Even Charley Buller vows he 's
Hipped to death by "both their houses!"

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GRUMBLER!—hadst thou no design
Tully of "The Times" to shine?—
Had Ribands red, or green, or blue,
No attraction in thy view,—
If Treasury Warrants "please to pay,"
Ne'er tempted thee on Quarter-day,—
Nor ayes nor noes,—nor Lamb nor Peel
Would force the steam up of thy zeal.
'Tis SELF whom thou dost represent
In the High Court of Parliament!—

CRICKET!—'Tis not because a snobby
I do my duty in the lobby,—
Fate doth her blows, as on a cur, vent
Upon your most obedient servant!—
Lo! Inkson's blackest books I stand in,—
Burghart's defaulter I 'd a hand in;—
My name is writ with all its vowels,
In ledger seventy-five, at Howell's!—
By way of assets—Prussic acid,—
A parish coffin,—and—*Hic Jacet!*—

GRUMBLER!—I see you think to nick it
By slyly making game of CRICKET!—
No go!—I 'll neither back a bill,
Nor name a spendthrift in my will;
But take advice, sir,—therewithal,
Insects, like men, are prodigal.
☞When house and lands are gone and spent
A prudent match is excellent;—
Women of cents,—I mean the five,—
Reclaim the saddest rake alive!—

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A warm fireside, sir, snug as GRYLLO's,—
A reading-chair, with patent pillows,—
A hissing urn and Twining's best,—
A Bentley's Mis. to give it zest,—
No books but Coutts and Co. to bore him,—
No debt, but Nature's, *in terrorem*,—
No Almack's, with its varnished pumps,—
No Travellers', with its "what are trumps,"—
With Madam, happy as a queen, he
Sings "Jubilate!"—like Rubini!

If this, sir, suit your book, pray stick it
In, *à propos de bottes*, from

CRICKET!

For my part, I am not addicted to English Misses!—I have not the smallest weakness in favour of pretty faces with as much expression in them as that of a sunflower. It was therefore through no seeking of mine that the whole of that season I had always a Maria or a Julia on my arm or in my pocket;—that I was sung to,—prattled to,—danced at,—drawn at,—rode with, flirted with, by every muslin frock purposing to promote its muslin into brocade. Five years' absence from England had converted me into

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what the silk-mercers call a "novelty of the season." Neither mothers nor daughters were by any means certain what might be my predilections. I was an open borough. Anybody might have me, they fancied, who canvassed with sufficient zeal; and, as I live by cake, they did not spare either themselves or me!—

I do not much like reverting to Lord Ormington. The feelings prevailing between us were of too serious a nature for trifling mention. Nay, I look upon our relative position as the groundwork of a domestic tragedy of the Christian world, fully as direful as the wrath of Nemesis, or the persecution of Neptune or Jupiter in the pagan. Half the inexplicable antipathies we see in families arise from misgivings or certainties, such as rendered me hateful in his eyes; and if woman in her wanton follies would only please to remember that, in addition to the shame she is entailing on herself, she is concentrating hatred and malice on the head of an innocent being, she might be perchance restrained in her career of sin.—But women

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who indulge in wanton flirtations, have seldom feeling or sense enough to be touched by such an argument. Many a Lady Ormington, and many a *femme incomprise*, though full of picturesque sensibilities, would see without a pang her offspring *écorché* and hung up like the rabbits in a poulterer's shop.

I must, however, allude to his lordship, so far as to observe that, from the period of poor little Arthur's death, he had never held up his head. It had been beyond my strength of mind or body to attend the obsequies of the poor lost innocent; but Lord Ormington accompanied Danby into Lancashire to see him laid in the family vault, and support the afflicted father. The unbaptized infant was laid at the same time in the grave; and I verily believe that, standing beside those two little coffins, which seemed to complete the extinction of his legitimate branch, Lord Ormington vowed against me a vow of eternal hatred.—I am convinced he regarded me in the light of as accomplished an assassin as the cruel uncle of the Babes in the Wood!

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Be that as it may, poor man, he never recovered the shock. He had collected at the time all the newspapers detailing this afflicting calamity; which, as it related to the heir of a noble family, dwelt of course with the utmost pomp and circumstance upon the sad event. Morning papers, evening papers, weekly papers, monthly summaries, nay, even the Annual Register, of that disastrous year, were placed apart in his private room, tied up with mourning-strings and bindings, to be perused and re-perused whenever he found himself overcoming the force of those grievous recollections. He brooded upon his sorrow, as an old man might be expected to do who knew that *he*, at least, should not survive to witness its obliteration by brighter prospects. For many months, Lady Susan lingered on the brink of the grave; and even when the physicians pronounced her out of immediate danger, they acknowledged that it was most unlikely she should again become a mother.

Now had Lord Ormington's affliction been a

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truly grand-paternal feeling of tenderness for the issue of the loins of the issue of his loins, Danby's little girl, one of the prettiest and most engaging little creatures I ever beheld, would have sufficed for his consolation. But it was not so. I knew from good authority that he never evinced the slightest interest in the child. All his regrets were for the two boys,—the heirs of his titles and estates,—the heirs who were to have circumvented the pretensions of the interloper, Cecil Danby!—It was me he hated, not poor little Arthur whom he loved. Nay, I suspect that in the depths of his soul he would have by no means regretted the death of Lady Susan, whose illness he affected to take so much to heart. He wanted a wife for Danby who was likely to become the mother of sons.

Meanwhile, the poor man was shrunken up with his afflictions, till nothing seemed left of him but his whiskers. The old wretch, Coulson, his eternal shadow, was now the shadow of a shade. We had met once or twice, when, on my

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return to England, I went to pay my respects to my mother, who seldom left the house; and as nothing had occurred to justify any overt act of severity towards one who bore his name and had been introduced into official life under his paternal patronage, he was forced to meet me on courteous terms. He had not even an excuse for referring me, as he had done ten years before, to his solicitors; though I accidentally discovered that, after giving up all hope of an heir from Lady Susan, he had been engaged day after day in professional consultations with old Hanmer, concerning the possibility of cutting off the entail of his estates. The law, however, stood my friend. On that point, from the respect testified toward me by the chaperoning class of the community, I knew myself to be safe.

But what a cheerless and penitentiary-like aspect now invested the house in Hanover Square! It might be said of its hopes, as of Ophelia's violets, that "they all withered when my nephew died."—From that day, the place had never worn

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a smile. It looked doomed,—deserted,—sorrow-stricken! — An air of dilapidation may be imparted to a mansion in the best possible state of repair, by trifles imperceptible to its inmates. Lady Ormington, who was now a confirmed invalid, (from the effects of a sort of paralytic attack, said by the physicians to be the result of laudanum, whereas her ladyship protested the laudanum to be the result of her illness,) never quitted the floor containing her bed-room and dressing-room; and Lord Ormington having assigned to his own use two rooms on the drawing-room floor, the great drawing-room, formerly so celebrated through the *fêtes* and fashionabilities of my mother, was uninhabited.

No one but the housemaid ever entered there. The windows, I suspect, had not been cleaned since I quitted England. But what imparted a still more melancholy look to the house, to the eye of the passers-by, than even the thick encrusting of dust and soot streaked off in certain directions by the pelting of April showers,—was

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a row of old flower-pots, the plants in which had been dead for years but still rustled their dry stalks in the wind, unsusceptible of the change wrought on all around by the coming of the spring or departure of the summer. In one corner stood a pile of red pans, which I suppose had formerly contained these flower-pots; and the sparrows chose to perch and build round this unsightly rubbish, as though the house contained no living inmate. It was scarcely possible to recognize its dull, dingy, dispiriting façade as the same before which, on leaving college, I found in daily waiting the smartest equipages in town;—bright chariots, with their pair of bloods and snowy-wigged coachman, as proud on his hammer-cloth as a chancellor on the woolsack;—with tilburies and led-horses as sprucely turned out by their knowing grooms, as the best-dressed fellow going, by the best-dressing valet.

No carriage approached that desolate doorway *now*, save the humdrum vehicles of Lady Ormington's daily apothecary or the gig of Lord

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Ormington's man of business; oilskinned and patent-leathered, from the servants' hats to the horses' coats, as if to defy all inclemencies of weather; — wayfaring vehicles, meant only, like their owners, for use.

What is it I have seen quoted from a fellow called Wordsworth, as motto to some chapter of a fashionable novel?—

> A pleasant spot it was, in times of old;
> But something ailed it now,—the place was curs'd.

Even the servants, who remained unchanged chiefly because his lordship and her ladyship wanted spirit to make any alteration in their establishment, had oldened and withered twice as fast as the menials of more vivacious households. — My lady could bear no noise.—The doors, both lock and hinge, were kept as carefully oiled as the tongue of Charles Phillips, or wigs of Carlton House. — Double stair-carpets, double doors in the hall; — no chance of a footfall or a footman's rap startling the tender ear of her ladyship. — Even the canine "Cynthia of

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the minute," was expected to be as mute as poor Bibiche, who still stared out of her glass-case, not near so much the worse for wear as her living contemporaries.

In other family mansions of London, when the dissipation of youth subsides into the social intercourse of middle age, a younger generation shoots up its verdant branches, shutting out the realities of decrepitude or the prospect of the grave. — But my mother had nothing about her but her living toady and stuffed lapdog.— Peculiar circumstances rendered me distasteful to the house, and the house distasteful to my brother and sister. There was no cordiality between Lady Ormington and Julia,—who was now so completely an integral part of the ministerial circles, that she seemed scarcely to know herself when thrown by chance into general society. As to Danby, his existence throughout the Session lay in the House of Commons; and, at any other period of the year, in his library at Forest Lodge. — Not one of the three entertained any

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really filial sympathy with that dreary old house in Hanover Square, now as dumb and dingy as a London sparrow.

I seldom wore down my spirits by entering the door. — I was almost as much out of Lady Ormington's good graces as those of her lord. — She was very angry with me for being nobody; — reproached me bitterly with having thrown away my prospects in life; — showed me Herries and his two thousand a year, and Sir John Harris and his knighthoods, as examples of what I ought to have achieved; — protesting that had I stuck to the Foreign Office and persuaded Lady Theresa to stick to *me*, we should now have been Sir Cecil and Lady Theresa Danby, Excellencies at Stutgardt, or Munich, or Naples, or some other city not demanding a K.B. or K.G. in its ambassadorization.

In vain did I assure her that I was one of the finest gentlemen about town; — that I ate the best dinners in the best houses, day after day, from January till July; that my *bons mots*

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were recited at the Clubs, — my *bonnes fortunes* whispered, wherever such things ought not to be talked of. — She only shrugged her shoulders at my boastings; muttering something which her paralytic affection prevented from being *very* distinct, about,—"Ay, ay! Sir Lionel over again; — and like Sir Lionel, he will die in the Bench!—"

Poor woman! — she was so much impaired in intellect, that it was impossible to resent her attacks. — I was there one day, sitting in that stuffy dressing-room, redolent of parrot, toady, opodeldoc, paregoric, and a villanous compound of patent medicines, too numerous to be included in anything short of the shop-bills of Newbery or Sanger, when in came Lady Harriet Vandeleur; who, to do her justice, was constant to her old friend.

I swear I shuddered as I looked at her, to think how sincere had been, at one moment, my intention of making her Lady Harriet Danby! The sixteen years' seniority which then converted

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her into a brilliant woman of the world, as regarded the raw boy from the University, made her now a hag, while I was in the pride of my days. — Hot rooms, pearl-powder, and the wear and tear of fashionable life, had indented her features with such indelible traits of the progress of time, that she made it a point to keep down her black Chantilly veil while paying a morning visit; — a practice which, among foreigners, would have passed for an act of impertinence or insanity. — Everything about her now, was *postiche;* — bandeaux, teeth, bloom, shape, lips, eyebrows, *all* as per advertisement! So false did she appear to me in every item, that, when guilty of a laugh, I longed to ask her where she had bought it. It *was*, in fact, what comedians call a stage laugh; — a distinct ha! ha! ha! or — hi! hi! hi! — that never went further than the lips. Could one have examined her heart at that moment, there was no more gaiety in it than in Lady Ormington's empty drawing-room.

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How I lauded my stars, — my stars, and not my prudence,—which had saved me from being yoked in harness with an old woman nearly fifty in age, and nearly a hundred in appearance. Nothing that money could afford would have compensated so ridiculous a position. I should have seen "Danby and his old woman" written in the face of every man who sat at our table, congratulating me upon the merits of my bill of fare. — As it is said of an ambitious girl, that she has married a title, it would, in fact, have been said of *me*, that I had married my cook.

I know not what were Lady Harriet's secret feelings; but she always pretended to rejoice in the discretion which had kept her faithful to her jointure. She had now attained a time of life, when doing what we like in our own way of doing it has a wondrous charm; and I suspect the unlimited monarchy of her house and stables, time and convenience, went for more in *her* calculations than all the sympathy

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and tender companionship that love or matrimony ever invented to Edenize the fate of man or woman. — She was selfishness and egotism personified. A smoky chimney, or an ill-shutting window, were evils she thought deserving serious complaint.—The quondam divinity was now of the earth, — earthy.—She called for fat with her venison, — liver with her fish; and was, in short, a very nasty old woman.—

I,—(for, after all, as I am writing my own adventures, I *must* talk about myself,) — *I* was in my meridian;—Apollo in his car,—Jove in his chair.—Never had I been half so good-looking, —never half so agreeable.—Not only were my comely features set off by a most Macassar-oil-like growth of indigenous hair,—not only was my figure thrice as well knit, and consequently thrice as graceful in its movements as of yore, but the whiskers of my mind had sprouted, and my conversation was as easy as my attitudes. — By knocking about in the world, the nonsense gets knocked out of one. The habit of ad-

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dressing all sorts of people in all sorts of languages, compels us, in the first place, to know exactly what we mean; and to invest our meaning in the expressions most likely to make it intelligible to others. — Very young men, either through confusion of intellect or confusion of countenance, or profusion, that is affluence of ideas, overflooding their eloquence, are sure to say too much or too little. — The Cecil Danby of Cleveland Row said exactly what was necessary. — His periods were round, — his arguments square.—The men, for their own sakes, wished to hear more, — the women, for their own sakes, that they had not heard so much. The Clubs, more especially, became hushed to listen.—Delphos was come again! "*I* was Sir Oracle!"

Thanks to the manifestations in my favour of Helena Winstanley, and others of the beauties of the season, I began to see that the game was in my own hands; four by honours and the odd trick. I might become pretty nearly

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what I liked. Most people might, if they only knew it; — the faculty of knowing it, constituting what the world has come to the determination of calling genius. — To be a great writer or a great painter, is the result of feeling persuaded that you are capable of becoming a great writer or a great painter, and working up to the mark. — A great genius is, in fact, a narrow-minded man; — a man with a single pretension; —a man who, like Milton or Shakspeare, feels that he is only fit to write poetry; — or who, like Titian, will pass eighty years before an easel. Whereas a man of extensive abilities is too clever to chain himself down to an oar. — *His* tastes are universal. — *He* understands a little of everything; —can paint a little, write a little, play a little on every instrument. He is not *borné* enough to produce a *chef-d'œuvre*. *He* could not go scraping and polishing away at a block of marble for years, to bring forth at last a Venus de Medicis or Apollo Belvidere; or confine himself to a single canvass,

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like Michael Angelo, for the sake of producing a Last Judgment !—

Now Cecil Danby was a man of genius, or narrow-minded man. — I was conscious of the power of becoming dictator to the world of fashion,— and I became so. Even when Brummell was on the throne, ten years before, I regarded his dazzling supremacy as Oliver Cromwell in his youth may have contemplated that of the Stuarts ;— and in a recent interview with him at Calais, regarded him much as the Protector surveys the features of the decapitated King, in Delaroche's picture of Charles the First in his coffin.—Already, I was master of his sceptre !—

One thing bored me. I always entertained a personal leaning towards George the Fourth, both as the old friend of my mother, as the patron of my boyhood, and as a kindly-mannered, if not kindly-affectioned man. But I had wit enough to perceive that, living in a reign where coxcombry was courtiership, I should be lost by becoming of the court,—courtly. At Carlton

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House, I must of necessity subside into an imitator,—a shadow,—an echo,—a nothing!—It was only by a schism that I had the least chance of distinguishing myself.

As a dissident from the faith of *perruques à l'huile antique*, and waists like a bowstrung bolster, I had some chance of achieving distinction as founder of a sect; and consequently adopted an affectation of great laxity in my habits of broadcloth, and great strictness in my habits of life. I was the first man who appeared about town with his locks combed straight down on either side, in the style that has since been called *moyen âge*,—or *à la Clovis*,—or *à la C——h*. People swear now that it came to them from *la Jeune France*, which imitated it from the tombs of St. Denis.—Nonsense!—*I* invented it,—as the antipodes of the Adonis-wig of Majesty, and inimitable by the art of the perruquier.

But for my consciousness of power as a coxcomb of genius, I should probably have attempted

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some other means of obtaining renown ; for I saw clearly that the Kingdom of Dandyism was in its Lower Empire. As coming events cast their shadows before them, one felt already, even in the early part of the reign of George IV. a weary chill of mind and body, foreshowing the age of utilitarianism. The ornamental was about to pass away,—the graceful to evaporate.—As the decay of all religions is perceptible in their recourse to the accessories of materialism,— as Polytheism, when it found itself derided, besought aid from the chisel of Phidias, and Catholicism, when bereft of its divine influence, strove to renovate its altars by the pencil of Raphael,— so Dandyism, at its last gasp, called in the aid of Lawrence !—

Ten years later, and I should have been born *too* late for my vocation.—I can fairly say that I sunned myself in the latest rays of the declining star of Coxcombry ! —

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CHAPTER IV.

Je suis sorti de ma maison, le front haut, le menton relevé, le regard direct, une main sur la hanche, faisant sonner les talons de mes bottes comme un anspessade, coudoyant les bourgeois, et ayant l'air parfaitement vainqueur et triomphal.

Cosi per entro loro schiera bruna
S'ammusa l'una con l'altra formica,
Forse a spiar lor via e lor fortuna!

DANTE.

I HAVE been frequently disgusted in society, by the *de haut en bas* style with which people having accounts in round figures at their bankers, or coronets on their tea-spoons, inquire of some great writer or artist, "what he has been doing lately?—" as if his only purpose in life were to paint or scribble; they who would be amazingly

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surprised if the said painter or man of letters were to retort upon them with an inquiry of what they had been eating or drinking lately, — which, Heaven knows, is the only purport of their existence.

People used to offend me by asking pretty nearly in the same tone, on my first re-appearance in London, what "Danby was doing with himself?" Of course I perfectly understood them to inquire why he had ceased to speak in the House. From the moment of his *début* in public life, the world had looked on him as public property; and felt entitled to resent his holding his tongue, while there were so few orators extant in the most High Court of Parliament. He sat there still, and still did duty to his constituents and his country, if not to himself. From the period of that heavy family affliction, he had not once opened his lips. As the ancients used to cast into the grave of their dead the most precious objects in their possession, he seemed to feel that the noblest dedication *he*

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could make to the memory of little Arthur, was his reputation as a public man.

I, who had seen him hanging distracted over the dress of the lost child, like Jacob weeping over the bloody garment of his son, could enter into his feelings; and it consequently appeared to me profanation when, in the midst of a crowded ball-room, some trifler of the great crowd suddenly addressed me with questions concerning the seclusion of poor Danby, much in the manner they would have talked of some sulky opera-dancer, or invalid soprano.—

"One never hears anything now of Mr. Danby! Does he never mean to favour us again? —We are waiting for something striking.—It is vastly disappointing when a young man makes so promising a throw off, and does nothing afterwards worthy his reputation. At one time, it was thought he might end with leading the party. Castlereagh is worn out. Peel will never have pluck to succeed him. Danby has given no pledges, and would be the very man for us, if he

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could only manage to get up the steam again. To be sure, precocious flowers are the soonest out of bloom. Perhaps it may prove that his vein was a shallow one, and that he is worn out,—a squib, not a rocket. I am afraid it will appear that Emancipation and Abolition were his Pillars of Hercules; and that he will never get beyond them."

The only person who considered him improved as a public man, was Herries. Herries detested oratory, which he said was another word for flummery. Herries conceived that every man, that is, every member, went down to the House with his mind made up on the questions likely to come before it; and that the only word of any real consequence in his power to utter, was "ay," or "no." Everything else was a work of supererogation, —an interruption to the business of the House. He felt persuaded that the enlightenment of future times would decree that Parliament should be managed like the courts of law,—the Houses playing the part of jury, and the Trea-

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sury bench and a sort of devil's advocate, the part of plaintiff and defendant. A single speech on either side would serve all purposes of debate. He had no patience with the high-sounding speeches embroidered by reporters on the few mumbled words of certain popular members, as substantial roads are grounded on a foundation of faggots.

"I'm sure I don't know what they want of Danby!"—was the cry of my brother-in-law.—"He never misses a division.—What the deuce can he do more towards the support of government?"—

Herries considered that a strong human mind ought to be inaccessible to argument; that, even if one rose from the dead to persuade them, people having a Tory constituency should vote with the Tories,—people having a Whig, with the Whigs. An independent member was a sort of troublesome fool, a stumbling-block in the way of practical people.

My brother himself, all this while, main-

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tained a species of dignity of all dignities to me the most imposing; *i. e.* a self-seclusion wholly distinct from refusals of dinner-parties, or the surly veto of "not at home." A self-seclusion resulting from your influence upon the *minds* of other people, is as effective in preventing their approach with importunate questions or officious advice, as though you were surrounded by yeomen of the guard backed by the household brigade. Danby appeared in society whenever there was positive occasion for his appearance. At political-dinners, royal or ministerial, he was a coveted guest; and those who met him at such solemnities rarely failed to notice him as a man of cultivated mind and extended intelligence. He affected neither gloom nor reserve. He bore his family afflictions as though they were his own concern, and not that of society. His fortitude was as unaffected as it was earnest.

With me, his conduct was angelic. He saw how studiously I avoided him; and as I had

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not courage to approach his house, he came straight to *me*. Except a slight tremor of the muscles round his mouth as he cordially shook hands with me, there was nothing to induce suspicion that he entertained any other feeling in accosting me, but that of brotherly regard.—I am convinced that nothing but the dread of inflicting pain, prevented him from throwing himself on my neck and weeping bitterly. We had not met since the stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre that shut in all the sunshine of his life! — How could he be otherwise than deeply moved by the sight of one connected with such grievous associations?—

I saw by what severe mastery over his feelings his voice was made to retain its usual tone, as he directed the conversation to general topics, as remote as possible from all that supposed a family interest between us. — He talked of my travels.—He had never crossed the Alps, yet knew more of Italy than *I*, who had been wandering there for years!—He knew it through

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the classics,—he knew it through its modern writers, — he knew it through painters, historians, philosophers: — I, only by the practical itinerary of post-houses, restaurants, Opera-houses! — It is true I had stared at the Coliseum, and wondered at the Vatican; but their moral influence had entered into the soul of Danby, — he had studied the institutions in which they had their rise. Dante and Macchiavelli, Petrarca and Tasso, had imbued his spirit with Italianism: the utmost *I* could have done to meet him on this ground, was to spout a little bad Corinne!—

But I spared him all mock enthusiasm. There was something so true in my brother, that to affect spurious sentiments in conversing with him, would have been like trying to pass a flash note on a child. I admitted frankly, therefore, that I cared more for San Carlos and the Scala, than the Duomo or Vesuvius; and that the chief captivation I found in Italy, was the blueness of its skies and the

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supportability of its winters. I said something about green peas at Christmas, which he was good-natured enough not to scout; and finding me as material as ever in my tastes and feelings, fell upon neutral ground;—talked of the vegetation of Sicily,—the quarry garden of Prince Butera,—the papyrus attesting the Saracenic occupation of the island,—the palm-tree abiding there like some naturalized foreigner, lingering within reach of its African home.

"One of my inducements to visit southern countries,—Spain, Portugal, Greece, or Italy,—is the charm of their evergreens," said Danby. "The laurel is the only permanent verdure in which we excel; and I want to see the ilex, the bay, the myrtle, the cypress, the arbutus, in perfection. I have a passion for evergreens. To me, they are the nearest approach to the growth of a celestial sphere. Look at the orange with its flower, its fruit, its glossy foliage! Look at the bay with its musky verdure, that seems created to over-shadow the grave of a poet.

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Even the agapanthus and phyllerea of our cottage gardens delight me; even the yew and holly of our hedge-rows have a charm.—It is only a Frenchman who could upbraid them as

'Deuil de l'été, parure de l'hiver'

To me there is something sublime in their rigid durability. A very old evergreen, such as the ancient ilexes and bays I have read of in Spain and Portugal, or the cedars of Lebanon, conveys to my feelings an impression of awe!"

I dare say Danby wondered what there could be in these remarks, to suffuse my eyes with tears and cause my lips to tremble. I had never talked to him of Cintra,—never spoken of the grave of Emily, — inextricably connected in my memory with the ever-verdant growth of espaliers of orange-trees and myrtle, — the rustling of lofty pines,—and above all, the shapely branches of a rich and glossy bay!—

I tried to change the subject, by expressing my surprise that he had never been tempted to the Continent.

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"Like most men ambitious of doing too much, I have done nothing," he replied, slightly shrugging his shoulders. "I have always laughed at men's galloping tours,—whose merit consists in the computation of so many hundred miles a week; and so, to borrow from the epitaph, *per star meglio, sto quì*. I cannot do all I want, under a year's absence. In early life, I could not spare a year from the ambitions of parliament; now, the infirmities of my father and mother forbid me to quit England for so long a period. You, to whom the peculiarities of our family are no secret, must feel that for all our sakes I ought to be on the spot in the event of the demise of either."

From that first interview all awkwardness between Danby and myself disappeared. Yet, on Lady Susan's account, I refrained from the house. Though she extended her hand kindly to me, in pursuance of her sense of Christian duty or of her husband's entreaties, she could not command the complexion that went and

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came all the time I was addressing her; or the trembling of the lace ruffle of her sleeve, as she extended her thin white hand to mine. Such was the delicacy of her health, that I could not answer it to my conscience to expose her to the struggle of such emotions. I even fancied that an involuntary shudder pervaded her frame when I impressed a kiss upon the forehead of my little niece, now a promising little girl of seven years old, — extremely like Danby and Julia, and yet pretty.

I inquired of Jane, whether she remembered Uncle Cecil? — Instead of replying, she looked so wistfully at her mother, that I saw my name had been an interdicted word in the family.

I resolved, therefore, that the family should be an interdicted source of happiness to me. I could live without them. It is astonishing how much one can dispense with, so long as the illusions of youth surround one with a species of rainbow atmosphere, reflecting its hues upon the polished trivialities of social life!

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I suppose,— for one cannot exactly recall to mind one's feelings and reflections, at certain epochs, verified as by a weather-gauge,—I suppose that, at thirty odd, I must have understood the exceeding hollowness of the things of the fashionable world; that I must have regarded Almack's as one regards the slave-market at Tangier or Tunis; and that I knew my Self to be of as little account in the attentions paid me, as the Lord Mayor at his Easter dinner.

Nevertheless, I led a charming life of it; accepted everything that glittered, as graciously, if not as gratefully, as though refined gold. Easy for philosophers in attics, without so much as elbow-room to turn round in, (for how else can one account for their being so wretchedly out at elbows?) to dictate their asceticism to persons for whom the overflowing milk and honey of this world are served in Cellini tankards or plates of Raphael porcelain! — All philosophy, —all virtue, — is relative. I was always touched by the tears shed by old

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Sheridan when discussing, after a bottle or two, the disinterestedness of the Whigs in abstaining from office. "It is very well to talk of the public virtue of the Dukes of Devonshire and Bedford," said he, "with their hundreds of thousands a year. But for a man who never had a guinea he could call his own, to stick to his principles instead of succumbing to the temptation of place,"—and he wept bitterly!—

Just so, or rather in an exactly contrary sense am I moved, when I reflect upon the impertinence of such as would compare their obligatory self-denial, with the epicureanism of men born with a golden spoon in their mouths, and wise enough to fill it with champagne-punch or gin-sling, instead of milk-and-water or wormwood.

How was *I*, Cecil Danby, to pretend to Spartanism? — My senses were lulled by the sweetest music, — the most perfumed atmosphere;—and the companionship of the wise, the

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witty, the piquant, and the fair. — There was no occasion for me to submit a single instant of the day to the pressing-to-death torture of being bored. — People talked their best for me, and looked their best. — I carried my sunshine with me, as summer its welcome.—

Byron used often to say that the French possessed the two portentous words, "*ennui*," and "*langueur*," without an idea of the things expressed; while we, with only too terrible a certitude of the penalties, were wanting in words to define them.

"How the deuce are we to translate into English the word *ennui?*"—he once inquired of me.

"Rather tell me," I replied, "how you would translate it into French? — The verb '*s'ennuyer*' may be perfectly translated into English by the verb bored;—'*Je me suis horriblement ennuyé!*' meaning only 'I was horridly bored!' The noun substantive is of much

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rarer occurrence in the mouth of a Frenchman. — In England it has gained force by naturalization, like certain wealthy colonists in New South Wales and flashy foreigners established in London, who owe their social position to transportation. The powerful novel of Miss Edgeworth gave a sort of unnatural emphasis to the word, in the mouths of my countrymen."

At all events, Byron was right in asserting *ennui* to be a growth of our climate. *Ennui*, or spleen, as experienced in Grosvenor Square, is the mere surfeit of the good things of this world, falling upon a vapid, colourless order of society. — The utmost gaiety of London life, contrasted with that of foreigners, is as a poor thin-bodied wine, compared with the glowing warmth of generous Burgundy or the sparkling effervescence of Champagne. — In our highest circles there is an air of *gêne*. — We are dull silent people, incapable of flinging sunshine on the dial of life.

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To this I partly attributed my unlimited success in society. I had brought with me from abroad the sort of communicativeness, — the facility in receiving and imparting impressions, mechanically attained in continental society. — The great world found me very amusing, because I suffered myself to be amused, being itself too fine for any such concession; — and if in reality less entertained by the show-off dinners and well-rehearsed wit of the coteries, than by half an hour spent in laughing devilry with Byron on the shores of Como, or an evening passed in some modest apartment of the Faubourg St. Germain, in a circle where every one said his best, adorning with the charms of intelligence, as with a web of costly tapestry, the mean walls and shabby furniture of the place, — the delight of being flattered and worshipped, —of hearing around you the sound of sackbut, harp, lute, psaltery, and all kinds of music, and knowing yourself to be the golden image to whom the knee-worship of the multitude is

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addressed,—supplied all deficiencies of wit or gaiety.

It is a strange thing, — yet why strange, since a natural deduction from national customs and institutions?—that the affections which, on the Continent, infallibly fling themselves at the feet of some fair matron, have, in England, an instinctive propensity to prostrate themselves at the feet of some lovely damsel. — England is called the land of this, and the land of that: — among other things, it ought to be called a Land of Misses! — On the Continent young ladies are chosen for, in love and matrimony, by Papa and Mamma. — In England they choose for themselves, and consequently are forced to strive hard to be chosen. — I do not half like the position in which this order of things has placed the poor little dears! — They are told to be modest, gentle, undesigning; then supplied (like the itinerant Savoyards by their proprietors) with a monkey or cage of white mice, — sent forth to dance and sing for the

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captivation of passengers,—and threatened with punishment if they return at night unsuccessful from their campaign. — For my part, I never blame them when I see them capering and showing-off their little monkey-tricks for conquest. The fault is none of theirs. It is part of an erroneous system.

The consequences, at all events, were sufficiently agreeable to a certain *roué* of a certain age; who, weary of making the agreeable to the *charmantes Comtesses* of Paris, and the *belle Marchese* of Palermo, found himself suddenly placed upon a sofa in May Fair, like a Sultan in a Turkish ballet, in order to be danced to and sung to, by a succession of lovely Odalisques, obstinately bent upon obtaining the kerchief.—I gave myself up to the soft illusions of the hour. I should have been an ungrateful brute not to accept, with thankfulness, the attentions of which I was the object.

It was the spring time of the year,—that season when the Gardener's Vade Mecum directs you to

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take in tender plants at night-fall; and when the Chaperon's own book indicates the same judicious foresight. From April to August, it is equally part of my system to be taken in.—There cannot be a more agreeable vocation.—Of all occupations for an idle London man, commend me to that of being dupe to the mother of a very pretty daughter, in possession of a comfortable house and good establishment.

Lady Winstanley was a capital hand at that sort of thing. She had married her two elder daughters to calfish elder sons of rich country baronets, by the mere charm of an agreeable circle, where these animals found their crib and hay in comfortable readiness for them, and where they were more at home than in their own. The third daughter, being of a finer figure than her sisters, was destined by mamma for the peerage.— Mamma was right. — Helena Winstanley was a tall, graceful, queenly creature,—a Duchess D. G——, or at all events, by the letters-patent of Nature.

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One night, at a ball at Princess Esterhazy's, then in the zenith of her own beauty and triumphs, I had been struck by the extreme loveliness of a girl of peculiarly English aspect, — tall, fair, well-proportioned, natural in her manners, and apparently gracious in her address, for every one seemed pleased whom she accosted. I inadvertently asked her name of Lady Fitzharrington, beside whom I was standing; who, without even consulting my inclinations, turned towards her with "Miss Winstanley, allow me to present to you Mr. Cecil Danby."

To make manifest to one whose bow was so conciliating, my indignation at the liberty taken with my august presence, would have been misplaced severity. On the contrary, I set about making myself agreeable as diligently as I would have done to the Princess herself;—*so* eagerly, indeed, that a dignified, turbaned, chaperonly-looking woman (to whom Lady Fitzharrington whispered a word in explanation of my social

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position and Danby's state of health,) began to look her eyes out in a contrary direction, to conceal her satisfaction at the conquest achieved by her daughter.

Miss Winstanley proved as lively as she was handsome. There was nothing very striking in her conversation; but on a young and pretty girl the very desire to please confers a charm. When the turbaned lady approached to join in the conversation, I thought it decent to request an introduction, as an excuse to my conscience for having resented the one forced upon me to her daughter; and thus commenced my acquaintance with Lady Winstanley and her family. Then having, with becoming assiduity, called her carriage and put on her shawl, I jumped into my cab, and drove straight to White's to finish the night, thinking no further of the two tall ladies; who, I afterwards discovered, went home with the flattering unction laid to their souls of receiving a formal proposal on the morrow!—

I met them again next night,—was again civil,—

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and again, more than civilly entreated. The following night was Almack's; and as Collinet was in the orchestra, piping the charming valse of "Gentille Annette,"—the rage of the season,—I turned towards Miss Winstanley as the handsomest girl nearest to me, and asked her to dance. By good luck, she was a charming *valseuse*. I saw, as well as felt, that we were acquitting ourselves to admiration, and felt extremely pleased with her for the applause we obtained. There was but one way of showing my gratitude. I took her into the tea-room, and flirted with her through two cups of weak bohea, a plate of brown bread and butter, and biscuits enough to stock an outward-bound Indiaman for its voyage to Canton.

There is something inexpressibly gratifying in the envious looks cast at one by members who have not paired off, as one sits lounging beside one of the handsomest girls in a ball-room.—The significant glance which looks "Oh! ho!—" the determination not to hear what is going on,

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displayed in the countenances of all the listening old chaperons seated near one,— are vile encouragements held out to a flirting man, to look irresistible and talk as if he did not know what he was talking about.

I suppose Miss Winstanley understood what Cis Danby talked of—for she seemed exceedingly pleased, and at one moment I had serious apprehensions that she was going to call for a third cup of tea ; — whereupon I started up in pretended ecstasies at a new set of Musard's quadrilles, which seemed to render indispensable our return to the ball-room.—I took nothing, as the lawyers say, by my motion. Lady Winstanley, evidently thinking that the great business of the night was achieved, begged me to ask for her carriage. So I was forced to stand half an hour in that old barrack of a waiting-room till Townsend got up the family coach ; and I saw one or two people smile as much as to say " a match ! " when they saw me concealing behind the door, from the air of the street and the stare of the

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footmen, the smiling, silent, cloaked-up girl, so perfectly well satisfied to hang on my arm.

Next day, I found on my table in Cleveland Row the card of Sir Gabriel Winstanley. The next, I left two at his door, as in politeness bound; after which, came a formal invitation to dinner. I had half a mind not to go; for one knows beforehand the sort of fussy, full-dress, grand dinner-party of a country baronet, with a clumsy old service of plate, and clumsy butler, and clumsy saddle of fat home-killed mutton, which looks as if meant for Daniel Lambert to ride on. Having no engagement, however, for the day in question, I refrained from the cruelty of an excuse.

I was agreeably disappointed. Sir Gabriel, a man who spent his life at Boodle's, was a civil well-behaved person; who, I conclude, must have been rich in conversational powers, for he certainly never expended any upon his acquaintance. But he looked highly respectable, when carving his own venison, (for he had a soul above

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muttons,) and had assembled about him the chief worthies of my ancestral county, wherein he was himself a landed proprietor.

One is always worth five-and-twenty per cent. more among one's own county people, than others.—It was to Lord Ormington's Lancashire estates I was indebted for Helena's smiles and her father's invitations to dinner. Sir Gabriel had a very accurate notion of our family rent-roll; —more so, a confounded deal, than I had;—and he and Lord and Lady Fitzharrington, Sir John and Lady Styles, and Mr. and Mrs. Whittington Leigh, talked county at me one against the other, till I fairly wished the County Palatine scuttled in the Irish Channel.

I wanted to chat with Helena. It was a very pleasant thing to chat with Helena. Her greenish-gray eyes, fringed with black lashes, her white skin, her expressive lips, united their eloquence with her cheerful, joyous, youthful voice, to impart a charm to conversation pretending to nothing beyond rational common-place.—

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But rational common-place is, in the long run, that which pleases most. Wit keeps one too much on the alert to watch whether the shafts it launches attain their mark. Humour makes one nervous, lest it should degenerate into coarseness. Refined wisdom oppresses one with a sense of inferiority. Originality is a pretension that renders one critical. But plain, rational, common-sensical conversation, uttered by an agreeable girl, beside whom one is sitting in a comfortable cozy corner, wraps one round with a consciousness of comfort and repose. One has no fear of being startled,—no dread of being quizzed.—*C'est une nourriture saine et abondante.* One can fancy a long winter evening cheered by such a companion, with the aid of a good fire, good tea, and the last good novel.

The Winstanleys were now constantly inviting me.—They had a Duchess-cousin, of whom they were prouder than of their whole united family, who often lent them her box at Covent Garden; and they had one of their own, the alternate

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weeks, at the Opera. The boxes were well situated,—the family coach an easy one,—and old Winstanley's wines as good as the wine of that peculiarly inhabitative and well-settled class of the community,—the country baronets. I allowed myself, therefore, to be frequently monopolized by Curzon Street. Helena had a younger sister, almost as pretty and pleasant as herself. The elder daughters were married;—the son was an aide-de-camp in Ireland;—the father, a fixture at his club. There was no drawback upon the agreeable mornings I lounged away in friendly chat with the mother and daughters.

Now, I just ask my readers whether they discern any impropriety in my acceptance of Sir Gabriel's invitation,—whether they see any harm in my allowing Lady Winstanley to carry me about to play and opera, Greenwich dinners and Richmond picnics?—The summer was a fine one. The Wanstead House sale was going on, to afford us a pretext for one of these rural excursions. Another time, we rattled down to

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Kew, to view the Botanical Gardens, and eat our cold chicken uncomfortably on the grass. All these fits and starts were of the Winstanleys' own proposing. There was always some engagement in prospect; always something that enabled me in saying, "Good-b'ye," to add,—"I shall see you to-morrow."

Will anybody be kind enough to recall to mind the epoch when the English world became suddenly shamed out of its apathy towards the woes of the sister-in-law kingdom,—the hapless Island which, as Delos arose out of the sea to afford a birthplace to those glorious twins of nature, the sun and moon, Apollo and Diana,—may be surmised to have started out of the western main to afford a fatherland to the twins of civilization,—Starvation and Riot!—Will any one be kind enough, I say, to remember the Irish Ball, whereat John Ebers displayed his zeal, taste, and goodly countenance,—George IV. his Titus,—and I, my intimacy with the Winstanleys?—Will any one describe to those

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who never heard of the same, the brilliancy of the Italian Opera House,—floored into a ball-room, decorated with flags and lustres, garlands and trophies,—but above all, beaming with beauty from every box?—But if nobody besides myself in London will plead guilty to cognizance of an event that occurred so far back as A. D. 1822, I must even inform them, that the woes of the starving Irish had become such as to incline even exclusivism to mercy; and that everything finest in London society, in its finest gauds, was exhibited by the blaze of ten thousand lights, under the patronage of some fifty peeresses of the realm, at the cost of a guinea a peep, for the benefit of Old Ireland and her paupers.

Lady Winstanley was not the woman to neglect such an occasion for exhibiting her diamonds, her ostrich-feathers, and her daughters,—for even Caroline was let out of the Miss-cage for the night.

Of course I was too fine a gentleman to play fine on such an occasion. Certain of the Win-

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stanley set of dandies, — such small things as ensigns in the Guards, and younger brothers of the calfish elder sons married to the elder daughters, expressed considerable uncertainty about "showing" in such a mob. — "They had taken tickets — they could not make up their minds whether they should go." — Whereupon Lady Winstanley protested that "had not their cousin the Duchess been a patroness, nothing would have induced her to take her daughters into a crowd of so mixed a nature. She hated crowds. Helena hated crowds. Helena was frightened to death in a crowd!" — And then she looked beseechingly at me, as a hint that I should volunteer to be their escort.

I had no thoughts of being anybody's escort. I hate being tied down to time and place on such occasions; when a fit of indigestion, or an amusing paper, or a nap, may render the postponement of dressing indispensable to one's personal comfort. — I therefore expressed as much uncertainty about going, as the poor affected crea-

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tures who could be compromised by consulting their inclinations on so slight an occasion.

It happened that the day previous I was to dine at Carlton House; and by a concatenation of circumstances impossible to record without violating the sanctity of royal privacy, which from a person admitted to share its hospitalities I look upon as an act of Low Treason, I was invited to form part of the suite of the following evening. I was desired to give my arm to one of the most beautiful and distinguished women of the time.

One never objects to shine in public as the satellite of a fair planet, unless one happens to be in love elsewhere; which I was not. — It was very agreeable to me, therefore, to secure one of the best places of the night, and the *entrée* of the private staircase, by the small concession of attending on one upon whom every eye was turned on her entrance. Lady R * * * made her appearance in her box just as that memorable quadrille of professionals was danced

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before the King, by Noblet, Mercandotti, and a set of fellows whom one usually saw capering in rouge and lace tuckers, and who now figured in uniform (*proh pudor!*) as officers of the Guards. But though little Maria was just then enjoying the popularity which shortly afterwards promoted her into the ranks of private life, no sooner was the noble brow and splendid figure of Lady R—— visible above the horizon, than every eye was diverted from the dancers to our box.

Because all the other women present, with the exception of Princess Esterhazy and the beautiful Duchess of Rutland, wore plumes to accompany their full dress, my queen of the night was attired in simple though richly draperied robes of white satin, with only a garland of shamrocks, formed of emeralds and diamonds, in her raven hair. Had there been a queen then extant in England, the Countess would have been mistaken for her; so matchless was the air of distinction conferred by this simplicity of dress, united with the creamy whiteness of

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her skin, contrasted with the blackness of her hair.—As it was, she was "every inch a queen," —that is, a beautiful, blameless, unaffected and gracious woman, — a queen of Nature's crowning.

My perception of these merits, I suppose, imparted an expression of somewhat warm admiration to my countenance, as she leaned upon my arm: for when, late in the evening, as I was escorting her across the theatre on a visit to the box where sat her relative, the young and lovely Miss F——r, then on the eve of marriage, we came suddenly upon Lady Winstanley's party, I saw the cheeks of Helena flush crimson, then turn to an ashy paleness.— Five minutes afterwards, as I caught a glimpse of them again, Lady Winstanley was anxiously despatching my cousin, Lord Wolverton — (whom the reader may be charitable enough to remember, when paying his court to Lady Harriet Vandeleur, as "little Squeamy,") in search of the carriage.— I would have given anything to be able to

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offer my assistance. — But the heaviest set of darbies is scarcely a greater obstruction to a man's liberty of action, than a beautiful woman hanging on his arm.

This little incident spoiled the satisfaction of my evening, which had promised to deserve a white cross.—All the rest of the night, I was haunted by Helena's pale face.—I flatter myself that, in my worst of times, I was never much of a monster to these tender creatures.

Quando leoni
Fortior eripuit vitam leo?

I was never more cruel to them than could be helped. Why, why has Providence created them with such feeble temperaments, or the coarser sex with such powerful attractions!

By one of those inexplicable chains of association which, more than all the preachments of all the churches of Asia or Europe, establish the immortality of the soul, I ceased to fix my admiring gaze on the beaming face of her who was now the centre of a circle, to direct them

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towards that fatal box, — that hateful box of the d'Acunhas, — usually almost undistinguishable among its fellows, but rendered remarkable amid the brilliancies of the fête by a chandelier placed before it, and a waving banner appended to its façade.— My eye seemed fascinated to the spot. — I fancied I could see the well-remembered curls of chestnut hair still drooping behind its curtains !

Nec tamen hic oculos falli concedimus hilum,
* * * * *
Proinde animi vitium hoc oculis adfingere noli.

The result of my compunctious visitings was highly favourable to Helena. I recalled to mind the disastrous result of delay on a former occasion; and next day, not later than two o'clock, was at her door.

Lady Winstanley was never visible at that hour; but *I* was privileged. The servants admitted *me*, saying they would "let my lady know."—Down came "my lady" in her dressing-gown, looking as agitated as an aspen in a

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North-wester.—Poor woman!—I am convinced she thought I was come to propose for her daughter; even after I had paid my compliments of inquiry, and begun to talk about the Royal displeasure said to have been expressed towards those who appeared at the fête without plumes.—By way of reply, Lady Winstanley mentioned that her daughter was indisposed with a headache from the extreme heat.—Yet I saw by the nervous anxiety with which she watched the door, every time the slightest sound was audible, that she was expecting her down: Helena was evidently under orders to make her appearance.

She came at last, and lovely indeed she looked; that is, lovely to me, who did not fail to attribute a certain redness of the eyelids singularly at variance with the smiles of joy that dimpled round her mouth, to a sleepless night, occasioned by the supposed infidelities of a certain Cecil Danby.—How could I be otherwise than gratified by so just a tribute to my merits?—

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From that day, my attentions became more pronounced.—All I said was spoken in whispers, and my looks said more than words, in assurance to Helena that I thought her not only handsomer than Lady R——, but than all the united ladyships of London.—I took to dancing again, dancing being the only privileged occasion for *pressing* declarations which are no declarations at all; and not a supper-room in London, whose door might not have told tales if it chose, of the earnestness of the handsomest man in town, when leaning against it with his eyes fixed in unclouded sunshine upon those of one of its prettiest girls.

Lady Winstanley looked triumphant. She was in a perpetual course of smiles. Though I could see, when approached with congratulations by rival chaperons, who longed to tear her eyes out, that she vehemently begged no one "would suppose there was anything *in it*," (what English these women talk!) "the lady did protest too much," so much, indeed, as to

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leave a conviction on their minds that the marriage settlements were in process of engrossment. Helena protested nothing,—she only listened,—only smiled.—It is very agreeable to listen and smile to a man who has all the appearance of being desperately in love; and though the three distinct words, which would have been more to the purpose than all the sighs and looks I was lavishing, were never even hinted at, she had reason to expect that the next moment might, at any time, startle formal proposals out of my cautious lips.

Mammas get nervous when the month of June expires without the undecided man coming to the point. When July sets in, the landed proprietors grow harvest-bitten, and want to have a look at the crops.—Sir Gabriel, I suspect, bored them amazingly with his peas and beans, when I was not present; for I could see that Lady Winstanley grew horribly agitated every time he opened his mouth, lest he should fix the day of their departure from town. Helena still

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smiled on, in happy serenity. She saw me every morning in our riding parties,—every night at our balls.—She was content.—She took no thought for the morrow.—No more did I.—

The King was to visit Scotland at the close of the session, and I had received a gracious invitation to be of the party. I had long been desirous to visit the capital of the ancient kingdom, with whose beauties it is a disgrace to an Englishman not to be acquainted.—Whenever the expedition was alluded to, I could perceive a smile twinkle in the eyes of Lady Winstanley; why, I can't pretend to say. There was nothing *very* amusing in the idea of my being about to astonish the good people of Edinburgh with a sight of the most symmetrical figure that ever did honour to the tartan.

One morning, towards the end of July, as I was coming out of Watier's to go home to bed, by that peculiar, greenish, aqua-marine light, through which one never sees anything moving in London, but dandies and watchmen,

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going their rounds and their squares,—I was hailed by Sir John Harris. He was driving home from Carlton House, after a carouse which had witnessed a more than usual consummation of wits and liqueurs, and sat swelling in his many-buttoned coat, as if it contained something to be proud of.

Though it was only to acquaint me with the exact day of our start in the royal yachts, (which were to be steamed to Edinburgh,) that he stopped me, he saw fit to add,—"But what signifies, my dear fellow?—after so gross an act as a match with a country baronet's daughter, you surely will not show your face among us again?"

"*Who* says I am about to marry anybody's daughter?" said I, gravely.

"All the world."

I expressed myself with suitable emphasis, concerning the folly and impertinence of all the world.

"I am glad to hear you plead not guilty,

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Cis," replied Sir John. "Believe me, I have said what I can, to exonerate you in certain quarters. I have done my best to justify you in the eyes of society. I have gone so far as to contradict the report, at White's, on my own authority;—but no one believes me."

"*I* believe you!" said I, drily.

"They all protest," continued Harris, not perceiving my sneer, "that you are perpetually *fanfilé* with these vulgar people,—that you are seen in their carriage,—that you are noticed dancing with the girl, night after night."

"What would you have?—The Winstanleys invite me to their house,—I accept.—I can't help their having a daughter. But it does not follow that I am to marry her."

"It does, I can tell you, in the eyes of—"

I made a coarse rejoinder by way of interruption; whereupon, blinking his own eyes, with an air of maudlin consequence, Sir John touched his fine horse on the flank, and away

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went the cab and its two brutes, at the rate of fifteen miles an hour.

But the blow had struck home. I made a very late, and very short visit to Curzon Street that day. Instead of riding, I sauntered to the tennis court.

On my return home, there was a little flummering three-cornered note, from Lady Winstanley, reminding me that I was to meet them at Vauxhall, as she had a supper-party afterwards; to which I wrote a civil answer,—"how could I possibly forget, &c., &c." But the deuce a bit did I go near them.

The following day, I went down to Hampton races,—a party at Oatland's. We made four pleasant merry days of it; — and for two more after my return to town, I was so busy paraphernaliazing myself for Scotland, that I never found a moment to call in Curzon Street.

At the end of the week, came another note from Lady Winstanley. "What was become of me? —Was I lost? — They were anxious

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lest I should be indisposed." I had not courage to show my face in reply to these kind inquiries. So I stayed away:—played more tennis —more *écarté*; —saw Nicholls about my new stocks,—Elvey about refitting my dressing-case, and divers other persons, concerning whom, there is no need to trouble the public. I went through all the duties, in short, of a coxcomb on the eve of leaving town;—*brusquer*-ing the *liaisons* from which I had nothing further to gain, and creating armaments for new expeditions and future conquests.

August was come;—tawny,—copper-coloured, —heart-achiferous August,—the terminator of so many projects,—the blight of so many hopes. Lady Winstanley's last little note informed me, that they were about to leave town; and as, though I had no thoughts of marrying Helena Winstanley or Helena anybody else, (how was I to marry,—a gentleman in lodgings, with an embarrassed income of five hundred a year?—) though I had no thoughts, I say, of making

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her Mrs. Cis, I had just as little desire to make her unhappy; so I resolved to go and take leave of her in the handsomest manner, attributing my previous neglect to indisposition, and expressing a hope that we should meet in Lancashire in the autumn.

I had lived on terms of sufficient confidence with my brother vagabonds at Watier's, to know how very few words whispered in a proper tone, to a girl who is leaving town, by the fellow who has been flirting with her throughout the season, will suffice to send her into the family coach, happy and contented, with renovated hopes for the event of another spring.

It was a deuced hot day; the sort of day when one begins to think about shooting-shoes and percussion caps, and to feel a destructive propensity connect itself with the name of the Moors. I sauntered into Gunter's, on my way to Curzon Street, for a white currant ice,—the only safe species of nutriment in the dog-days.

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From the mere aspect of the counters in Berkeley Square, one might have sworn that the season was over! — Instead of vans at the door, clatterings of china and glass, cross porters swearing under their green trays, and thousands of white paper parcels, all addressed to the same happy house, destined that night to receive and refresh, "five hundred persons of the highest ton,"—the tables were covered with white paper parcels, addressed severally to the five hundred persons of the highest ton, containing the wedding-cake of the match of the morning,—as sure a produce of the balls of the season as Sir Gabriel Winstanley's crops from his sowing in seed-time.

I sat cooling myself with my ice to the proper temperature of a man about to say good-b'ye to a beautiful girl, to whom he has been making desperate love up to the moment that made it clear to him the danger he had designed for *her*, might light upon himself. When quite composed and comfortable, I drew down my light

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brown beaver hat, drew up my straw-coloured gloves, and nodding to the girl at the counter, as much as to say, "an ice — put it down to my account," lounged out of the shop, and through Lansdowne Passage,—that emblem of a younger brother's fortunes,— mean, dispiriting, and without prospect, with overflowing wealth and enjoyment bounding his views on either side.

I noticed, as I proceeded along Bolton Row, that grass was growing between the stones. But the Winstanleys' door discovered a still more positive proof of the emptiness of town. Straw was scattered before them,—not the thick trusses announcing the advent of sons-and-heirs,—but scattered straws, as when magpies are building their nests, or family waggons departing to the family seat, for the conveyance of all the family moveables not compassable within the family coach.

Gone! — No need to knock and inquire.— The windows were closed.—The maid of all-work

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"as takes care of the 'ouse," was sole empress of a region embellished the preceding day by the presence of youth,—beauty,—gaiety,—music,—flowers.

"*Gone!*" sighed Cis,—as he turned from the door—

> Perchè, dubbiosa ancor del suo ritorno
> Non s'assicura attonita la mente.

"Well! I am not sorry to be spared the leave-taking!—Helena is a sweet creature, and I could scarcely have borne to witness her emotion."—

Relieved from all fear of meeting them, I ventured that night to one of those charming little close-of-the-season parties, where one says and does all one forgot to do and say in June, at the Marchioness of Devereux's; who, under Lady Harriet Vandeleur's pernicious instructions, had progressed into one of the many London women who fancy that because their husband is a gambler, and on the turf, they are ex-

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cusable in taking a lover, who is probably ditto repeated.

It was a charming little circle, — a circlet of stars; people who were of the expedition to Scotland, or above even that. I observed that Lady Harriet, (who, like too many women after losing their last vestige of good looks, had lost her last vestige of good-nature,) seemed mightily rejoiced to see me enter. I was consequently prepared to find her prepared with a handful of sarcasms to fling in my face.

"Yes, — you are quite right to go to Scotland!" was her reply to my announcement of my plans; "the further you go out of hearing of the outcry raised against you by those people, the better."

"What outcry,—what people?"—

"The country-baronet-people, whose daughter you have used so ill. They are going to take her to Clifton. She is in a deep decline."

"The only daughter of a country baronet with whom I am much acquainted," said

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I, coolly, "Is Miss Winstanley, who is in blooming health at her father's place in Lancashire!"

"I don't know what you call blooming health," retorted Lady Harriet; "but you may rely upon it that her mother has been intrusting in strictest confidence to one (hundred) or two of her intimates, that Mr. Danby has behaved infamously to her daughter, — paying her the most serious *at*tentions, without serious *in*tentions;—and —"

"I swear they ought to publish a Hand-book or Flirting Manual for the youth of both sexes!" interrupted I—(afraid of what might follow,) "in order to prevent these misunderstandings. I went constantly to Lady Winstanley's, because she constantly invited me. How was I to know she intended me to marry her daughter?"—

"She invited you because she thought *you* intended it. Everybody thought so."

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"I cannot see that everybody had any right to trouble itself about the matter."

"Public flirtations are public property."

"Did people expect me to be uncivil to a pretty girl who did me the favour to gratify my passion for waltzing? I never saw more in Miss Winstanley than a partner, and am pretty sure she saw no more in *me*. The 'everybody' whom you quote as sitting in judgment upon my proceedings, is aware that I am a younger son, without a guinea at my disposal."

"A younger son, whose elder brother is in declining health, without issue male. *That* fact is pretty well known. Lady Cork asked me to present you to her, to be the lion of one of her dinner-parties, as the man who had found it convenient to get rid of a nephew who stood between him and his inheritance,—the blackest of uncles since him of the Babes in the Wood!—Fact, 'pon honour!—Don't look so indignant.

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You know how fond we English are of anything *qui fait évènement*. One of the things which made you so much the fashion this season, was—"

"My reputation as an assassin?—Thank you,—both for myself and for the honour of London society! Miss Winstanley is quite justified in going into a decline, to get rid of such a monster. Meanwhile, pending my next murder, what say you to some *macédoine?*"—

But however indignantly I might scout Lady Harriet's assertion concerning Helena and her disappointment, I felt a little uneasy on the subject. The touching look which betrayed her emotion on seeing me whisper to Lady R——, at the Irish ball, ever and anon recurred to my recollection. I would have given worlds that the family had been still in town, in order that I might pour balm into the wounds of that loving heart.

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It may be a weakness; — but I cannot bear the thoughts of a woman dying for love of a wretched thing like me!

Imperet bellante prior, jacentem
Lenis in hostem!

I swore that she should *not* die!—and began to mutter Portia's charming panegyric upon the two-fold virtue of mercy!——

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CHAPTER V.

I wonder how the deuce anybody could make such a world; for what purpose, for instance, dandies were ordained, and kings, and fellows of colleges, and women of a certain age, and many men of any age, and myself most of all.

BYRON'S JOURNAL.

Ταυτοματον ἡμων καλλιω βουλευεται. MENANDER.

WE love to have a laugh against the ancients for any little absurdity we can dig out of Herculaneum, or unroll out of the mummies of Egypt; that is, not a laugh, but a prose,—for the English would sooner get a prose out of anything, than aught in the world, except ten per cent.

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We love, I say, to inflict long exhortations upon young gentlemen, whose ideas are shooting in the preserves of classic lore, touching the vices of Epicurus, the follies of Alcibiades, the enervation of the Sybarites, and so forth; and if ever I am Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow, to which, being a long-sighted and long-eared fellow, I have long had pretensions, I have some uncommon fine writing in my desk, with which I mean to pepper my address to the Schools, in a style to put to shame one of Macauley's articles, or the "Last Days of Pompeii." Now I only ask any reasonable being, (and consequently do not address the inquiry to professors, ushers, or schoolmasters,) whether any weakness recorded of the enervation of Rome or Greece ever exceeded the make-believe sailorship of royal yachting?

Of all times and places where luxuriousness is *out* of place, commend me to the wooden "castle on the brine" of the British sailor! Whether we regard a ship clergymanically,

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as a spot where only a plank divides one from eternity, or fine-gentlemanically, as a spot where the human heart heaves with emotions anything but tender or elegant, we must admit that a manly plainness is the style appropriate to the deep, deep sea.—French varnish, satin bolsters, gilded lamps, and arabesque mouldings, are only fit for the vulgarity of a Yankee steam-packet.—One of the wags of Watier's was pleased to say that, "in the fitting up of his yacht the King showed a great deal of taste,—and deuced bad."

Not being responsible for this error of judgment, I contented myself to enjoy our voyage in all the luxury of a progress, as brilliant by sea as Queen Elizabeth's by land; and must own that even *my* apathy was deeply moved by the aspect of Edina, mad as Ophelia with joy to welcome the King and his yacht's company.

"My heart warms to the tartan!"—I love the sound of a pibroch and the sight of a kilt!—

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All that is left of poetry or hardihood in the British islands is concentrated in the land of the Stuarts, which *deserved* to have Sir Walter Scott born among her sons!—The Muse, steam-engined out of England,—starved out of Ireland,—has taken refuge, I suspect, in some Highland shelty, "o'er the muir among the heather;" to commune with the storms of heaven and consecrate the earnest virtues of that peculiar race, who adhere to the sturdy virtues of their ancestors, and maintain their national loyalty, though robbed of the pomp and circumstance of regality which endears the throne to the cockney perceptions of the good city of London.

People talk of the coolness, caution, and reserve of the Scots.—I wish those who regard them as cold and reserved had seen them fling up their bonnets for King Geordie!—Edinburgh not only honoured and obeyed us, but fed and cherished us, as though "bonnie Prince Charlie" were come again. It was very gene-

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rally noticed, indeed, in the papers of the day, that a distinguished individual in the royal suite bore a most remarkable resemblance to the portraits of that unfortunate Prince, (produced, perhaps, by dressing after them,) but whether the allusion were to myself, or to Sir William Curtis, history must determine.—Of this I am certain;—that not a son of the mist threw his Highland flings more strenuously than myself, or more ardently enjoyed the "sparkie" which inspired the effort.—

I love a reel!—"*furor brevis*" perhaps, but one of the pleasantest little bits of madness in the world;—always in its proper time and place,—and not episodizing the pale monotony of an English ball, to make the Londoners yawn or shrug their shoulders.—Among the hills, and with a sonsie lass for a partner, I swear I could keep it up from July to eternity!—When Pope wrote about "wafting the soul upon a jig to heaven," he was clearly thinking of a Highland reel.

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The only thing that kept down my spirits at Holyrood, was the painful idea which, in spite of all my efforts, *would* intrude, of what might be going on at Winstanley Manor.—I had no means of obtaining information.—Lady Harriet's intelligence might be accurate.—With the fatal experiences of my past life, and the memory of Cintra and Venice vivid in my thoughts, I had, indeed, some reason to be anxious.—So long as I lived with Byron, the romance of life was smoked out of my head, like Tobit's fiend, by the extreme practicality of his views.—But, after being some time absent from him, the finer impulses of the soul budded again, like an esculent cut down for the vulgar uses of the table, and sprouting anew at the return of spring. I found myself remarkably sentimental after a fortnight's philibeggary among scenes consecrated to all that is glorious in the annals of Scottish history or song.

I don't know how it may be with the young

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fellows of the present day. I am afraid Crockford's has had a demoralizing influence. People eat better than they used; and I have observed, that where the cooks are good the morals are indifferent.—Perhaps, therefore, the lads I hear boasting of their conquests and flirtations, may be less accessible than we used to be in *my* time to fond emotions of pity and terror, when we heard of some gentle creature sorely tempted by the fish-pond in her papa's pleasure-grounds, or the phial labelled "laudanum" in her mamma's medicine chest. Poor Helena!—It was just the time that prussic acid began to be talked of as an accessory in heroic life. And the reader will be pleased to bear in mind that, as yet, stomach-pumps were not!—Poor Helena!—After all, we London men have much to answer for. There is a worse place waiting for us than the limbo of vanity.

It was a relief to me to obtain, through Sir John Harris, (by whose means all things were

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obtainable, from a mitre to a Guelphhood,) his Majesty's sanction to my quitting the royal *cortège* at Edinburgh, and cutting across the country to Ormington Hall. I had made up my mind never to enter the domain again; but I found that his lordship was with Danby, in the south; and consequently seized upon the pretext for visiting Lancashire, as a means of hearing something of Sir Gabriel Winstanley's daughter.

It is a hazardous thing to storm a country-house during the absence of the family. Though it was the month of August, Ormington looked as dreary and smelt as mouldy as the family vault.—The country servants ran about as if I had headed an incursion of the Picts and Scots. The steward talked about killing a sheep, (I would have knocked him down had he proposed a calf!) and everybody laboured hard to make me aware that my arrival was as much out of season as a hare in March.

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The only person from whom I had hopes of learning what I wanted to know, was the Reverend Dr. Droneby, who was lucky enough to have succeeded to the family-living which my Oxford follies placed within his reach; a dry, solemn old chap, supposed to have considerable influence with Lord Ormington. His parsonage lay half-way between Ormington and the Manor; so that he was likely to be well-informed touching the movements of the family. But it was scarcely possible to get a word out of him. He was, of course, a magistrate; and looked at me precisely as if he had a warrant of the peace against me in his pocket. I was glad to bow myself out of his presence, with information that the Winstanleys were not at home.

In reply to my inquiry as to what had taken them back so suddenly to the south, he replied with a grim smile, that he believed the journey was undertaken on Miss Winstanley's

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account; and looked so maliciously pleased when he said it, that I felt sure something afflicting was in progress. Recalling to mind the horrible consequences of my delay at Lisbon, that very night I got into the London mail. I would not play Titus well even *half* a day.

An hour or two after my arrival in town, I breakfasted at my club. The morning papers, fresh ironed, were just laid on the table; and, while my dry toast was crisping I took up the Morning Post.—A disagreeable presentiment assailed me as I unfolded the sheet.—On my way from Cleveland Row up St. James's Street, I had been instinctively repeating to myself those touching lines of Byron:—

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted,
To sever for years;
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss!
Surely that hour foretold
Sorrow to this!

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They name thee before me,
A knell to my ear;
A shudder comes o'er me,—
Why wert thou so dear?

and I swear a knell *did* seem to sound in my ear, and a shudder to gooseflesh me from head to foot, as I cast my eyes upon the tittle-tattle of that confounded Morning Post!

For at that instant the name of Winstanley caught my eye!—Helena,—my Helena!—

"We understand that Thursday next is appointed for the solemnization of the splendid hymeneals, by special licence, between the young EARL OF WOLVERTON, and HELENA, the third daughter of SIR GABRIEL WINSTANLEY, BART. of Winstanley Manor in the county of Lancashire, and Moy Park in the county of Fermanagh."

"Lady Teazle, by all that 's damnable!"—Little Squeamy, by all that was preposterous!—little Squeamy and my Helena!—

* * * *

I leave to the imagination of my readers,

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though not the strong point of the British idiosyncrasy, the fussy self-consequence of Lady Winstanley under such circumstances. Just as the calfish elder sons united with her elder daughters had been thrown into the shade by the younger son of an Earl, was the younger son swamped by the real presence of the Right Hon. the Earl of Wolverton, a man with a park,—with a villa,—with a house in town,—with family diamonds,—with everything a man who respects himself ought to possess, to propitiate the right-feeling mother of a right-thinking daughter. He was a donkey; but what then?—Did not the omniscient William Shakspeare allegorize, in Titania and Nick Bottom, the disproportionate passion of the fairest of fairies for a fellow with an ass's head?—

I do not ask my readers to share my indignation on discovering from Wolverton,—whom I met one day coming out of Gray's shop with a ring-case worth 900*l.* in his hand,—that he

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had been accepted on the very night of the Irish ball: that the red eyelids,—the tremours of mamma,—were all tributes to *his* merits, and not to mine.—Either these people were the cursedest hypocrites, or I was the vainest fellow in the world.

Let me concentrate in the fewest possible words the sequel of the adventure. Trusting to my *à-plomb* to prevent my chagrin from being apparent, I got through a visit of congratulation, and was invited to the wedding. There was not a soul in town to be the wiser for it. But I thought it would look well in the papers, for both our sakes, if I patronized the performance.

Let the public conceive, if it can, the Mercury of John de Bologna, dressed by Stultz, curled by Smith, and booted by O'Shaughnessy, if it wisheth to figure to itself Cis Danby, while standing as near as decency and the Bishop would allow, to the altar of St. George's Church; in contrast with the puny Earl of

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Wolverton, a little black aphis, who wanted only a needle run through him to fasten him into a glass-case, in order to form an interesting addition to any cabinet of natural history extant !—I trust the contrast was dramatic !—I flatter myself that Hyperion and a satyr occured to others besides myself !—

The insect hopped and skipped about merrily, however, at its wedding breakfast ; though poor Helena was too thoroughly blinded by tears to notice its saltations. For my part, I had courage to remain at the window with the rest of the party, to see Sir Gabriel place her in her bridal chariot-and-four, while the populace stood by applauding. Our eyes had not met, since the announcement of her marriage. I am glad she did not see me *then*, for I suspect I cut a sorry figure. Sir Moulton Drewe, turning towards the breakfast-table, invited me to take a glass of sherry with him, in a tone that plainly inferred " You had better, — or you will never get through it."—

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This roused my courage. On quitting the house, I persuaded him to send away his cab, —for, at that depopulated season, any equipage but an errand-cart depositing hares and partridges, attracts attention in the streets, — and saunter to White's for a game at billiards. It was indispensable that he should do justice to the steadiness of my hand; which he *did*, to the tune of a pony or two, before we parted. At that moment I loathed him. He was the friend and confidant of Wolverton, and must have guessed, pretty nearly to a pang, all I was suffering.

On reaching my lodgings, I despatched a letter to Byron, telling him to expect me shortly in Italy.—I knew he was at Genoa,—a city of palaces towards which my aristocratic tendencies always inclined me,—surrounded only by the Gambas and Guiccioli tribe; which, from the same prejudice, I greatly preferred to the linen-drapery connection. His letter-press confraternity was beyond my powers of toleration.

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Literature is, in my opinion, little more ennobling, as a matter of traffic, than calicoes or jacconots; and as a matter of anything else, to borrow from the renowned Bishop of Derry, "three blue beans in a blue bladder." Shelley, however, was *really* a fine fellow—gentleman to the backbone; and I have read a novel of Trelawney's which almost reconciled me to that trumpery branch of scribbling.—As to poetry, I will not do so tame a thing as decry it.—It is base to speak ill of the dead. I never kick a man when he's down; and the Muse has been so long consigned to the House of Correction, that I doubt whether she would get a situation as maid-of-all-work, if it depended upon character.

But Byron had extricated himself from his literary associations since the death of poor Shelley; and I thought myself sure of renewing those pleasant times when, London abounding with Kings and Emperors, such potentates as Byron and Cis Danby were al-

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lowed to descend into the pleasures of private life;—those times when, living familiarly with

Moore, Danby, Rogers, all the better brothers,

Childe Harold never forgot what was due to himself or other people.

From the tenour of Byron's answer, I found that he had again surrounded himself with persons whom I did not affection. Like amber, Byron had the unlucky faculty of attracting straws. The Mereparks, who had spent the preceding winter at Rome, warned me to avoid a clique certain to entail upon their associates a disagreeable notoriety. An insult offered to a lady of high rank connected with many who are sacred to my love and admiration, was the means of exiling them from a city where, as there is neither a sovereign pontiffess, nor English ambassadress, people sometimes find their way into society whose names are elsewhere spoken in a whisper; and all Italy was ringing with their adventures. — Nothing is

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less satisfactory than the company of people smarting under the contempts of the world. They see things in a false light. The irritations under which they are writhing, beget bitter blood. They are always talking at something or somebody,—always tilting with windmills. — Moreover, though a handsome, clever woman, be she whom she may, is adorable so long as she content herself to remain a handsome, clever woman,—by affecting the fine-ladyism of a promoted lady's-maid and the jargon of a *précieuse ridicule*, she becomes as wretched a thing as Shakspeare's bust, daubed with red and blue paint by the bad taste of the Stratford churchwardens.

I consequently extricated myself from my Genoa engagements, and have since lauded my stars therefore;—having no mind to figure in anybody's memoirs but my own; or that pennies should be turned by my sayings or doings, for the behoof of others, even though the purse destined to receive them be emblazoned with

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a coronet. I often admire how certain of my contemporaries, even now, allow themselves to be booked, to be made merchandize hereafter! But flattery, *i. e.* blarney, is the true song of the Sirens,—

Aditum nocendi perfido præstat fides!—

No matter!—there are certain fraudulent accounts, which posterity will balance with the rigid accuracy of a Treasury cashier!—

Between irresolution and disappointment, I loitered through the winter; undergoing a severe course of country-houses.—We are very proud in England of our country-house life; and as regards good eating, drinking, sleeping, hunting, and shooting, nothing can exceed the attraction of some dozen or so of our "residences of the nobility and gentry," who are obliging enough to keep open house for our sake and their own ruin.

But generally speaking, I have found the thing a bore. Sixteen hours of the twenty-four is too much to devote to one's fellow-

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creatures. In a country-house one can never be alone. When sinking under the labour of having been agreeable and chatty through dinner and evening, fellows *will* come and talk scandal in one's room at night. The women get up piques among themselves, to relieve the monotony of the mornings when their male moieties are hunting or shooting; — or worse still, private theatricals or charades, to prevent their hunting or shooting. And then the groom of the chambers prohibits smoking in the bed-rooms; and, *pour comble de malheur*, just as one gets inured to the detestabilities of the house, just as one has found out the deaf side of the *padrone*, the easiest arm-chair and coziest corner, it is time to go away, and begin one's experiences in

—fresh fields and pastures new!

As to the gaiety of a country-house in the Christmas holidays, it is as forced as its pine-apples, — as much "got up" as its theatricals.

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Either the party is as dull as a dormouse,—a sort of vapid compromise between public and domestic life; or enlivened by a monkey-man or two, invited for the purpose, and pestiferously disagreeable to gentlemen who are disposed to take things in an easier manner. For my part, I could almost as soon amuse myself among a showman's puppets, as with those who must be moved by a masterhand, in order to endow their wooden nature with vitality and fun.

All this time the Wolvertons were at their place in Ireland. The papers had given an eloquent account of the roasting of oxen and firing of cannon to welcome the young Countess, which must have caused the heart of Lady Winstanley to sing for joy.

Our first meeting after her marriage was at a concert given at Almack's by Rossini, where poor Maria Garcia made a *début* little in accordance with the after-fame of Maria Malibran. While pressing as near as I could to

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the piano, to catch a glimpse of Rossini's masterly accompaniment of his wife's miserable singing, my attention was attracted by a tremendous blaze of diamonds.—I seemed to recollect the face to which that gorgeous tiara and those splendid girandoles imparted lustre —I looked again.—The cheeks were hollow,— the eyes far less brilliant than the diamonds. Beauty was there, but beauty on its wane. Even when convinced by the observations of those around me that it was no other than Lady Wolverton, I could scarcely bring myself to believe that the bony arms and shoulders before me ever belonged to the fair, round, symmetrical figure of my lovely Helena! She looked worn,— woebegone,— harassed. — Was the gratification derived from the sparkling diamond tiara, sufficient compensation for such change?—

A day or two afterwards I met Wolverton at White's. Bustling up to me, he made a sort of ostentatious show of inviting me to his house,

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—talked about the taste displayed by Gillow in fitting it up, as if to decoy me into a visit; —and hinted at the merits of his cook, as if *that* must be a sufficient inducement. I would rather have "chopped" at the "Blue Posts," as I once did, fifteen years before, with Sir John Harris, before our faces were as well known on the *pavé* as the effigy of Britannia on a penny-piece!—

In process of time, the Countess of Wolverton was presented at Court:—the Countess of Wolverton was most graciously welcomed by the King:—the Countess of Wolverton figured in the lists of Almack's and at the *fêtes* of D—— House.—I hope she was satisfied;—that is, I hope Lady Winstanley was satisfied;—but she did not look so. A son-and-heir was in expectation. It might be that such an accession was indispensable for the completion of Helena's worldly peace. It was clear that *something* was wanting.

I left cards at her door, sent an excuse to

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Wolverton's formal invitation to dinner; and, to spare *her* feelings or my own, was careful to avoid her amid the mobs of fashionable life. One night, at a Saturday supper party at Lady L.'s, after the opera, I met her on the stairs; and, seeing that her situation rendered it difficult to her to ascend, could not avoid offering her my arm. I did not speak, however, more than the mutter indispensable to the occasion; and she accepted my aid in the same silence. We walked up slowly together, without exchanging a syllable; then separated. It was the only time I ever approached her after her marriage; the trembling of her arm and mine mutually betraying to each, the agitation of two persons but a year before all in all to each other, and now far less than nothing.

The most offensive part of the business was the self-importance of that wretched little item of humanity, Squeamy, —— I beg his pardon, —the Earl of Wolverton. Who will dare to

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undervalue the importance of birth and fortune, when we find them investing a pigmy with the attributes of a giant, and making a man of a mouse?—Had not the most insignificant atom in human nature pinned to his sleeve the handsomest girl in London,—thanks to this twofold endowment?—

Thousands and thousands of times have I wished I had been at Jericho, or Genoa, or Coblentz, or anywhere else, sooner than have been brought into contact with Helena that night, at the supper party. Just as she was dropping my arm in the lobby, the light of the lustre over our head fell upon her half-averted face, betraying certain glitterings, emitted *not* by her diamond coronet, since she wore round her head only a garland of blush roses. For years afterwards her tearful eyes haunted me!—*Those* diamonds were as thoroughly *my* gift to Helena as the tiara of the Right Hon. Earl of Wolverton!—All I had done in return for her young affection was to wither up her beauty,

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and tinge her bridal honours with misery and remorse!

Even attired as she was, however, the world was amazingly struck by her loveliness,—her simple dignity of air,—her gentleness of manner. The fine ladies were astonished to see anything so distinguished emerge from the park of a Lancashire Baronet. The fine gentlemen whispered, "By Jove! Cis, you are a more prudent fellow than *I* should have been in your place."—

Lady Winstanley, meanwhile, went fussing every day to her daughter's fine house, in Berkley Square, seeming to have lost all recollection of her elder daughters and their calves. It was a bitter mortification to her, that in Helena's delicate state of health, Lord Wolverton would not hear of giving a ball; not only because to a vulgar woman, like herself, a ball appears a mighty triumph, and indispensable to confer the honours of canonization in London society; but because, being still involved in the

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Miss-eries of human life, she thought that Helena owed to her younger sister the chances of promotion insured by such an advertisement. But the little Earl was inflexible. When he had made up his little mind, it was as firm as the minds of bigger men.

All the time, I was secretly patting him on the back; encouraging his resistance, and begging him, above all things, to beware of giving way to the influence of Lady Winstanley. I described a mother-in-law to him in general terms, and his own in particular; and flatter myself he made himself sufficiently disagreeable to Lady Winstanley to atone my wrongs and those of Helena.

Meanwhile, balls delighting me no longer, nor ball-givers either, I profited by the glorious weather of a delicious June, to betake myself to Cowes. I had nothing to do in London, that is, London had nothing for me to do; and at a certain period of the year, provided the summer do not set in *too* severe, I am usually

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affected with the marine epidemy, peculiar to the English constitution. I suppose it is because Britannia rules the waves that Britannia's sons and daughters, — cetaceous monsters! — cannot rest contented without once, a year, rushing *into* them.

I am almost ashamed, at this time of day, to indulge in a rhapsody about yachting,—now, as vulgarized as coaching, or steeple-chasing, or any other pastime of the Paradise of Fools. But when I and George IV. first indulged in the delicious recreation, regattas were in their infancy, and the high seas a high-way for gentlemen. I used to delight in it, when one had the Isle of Wight almost to one Self; that is, almost to the little knot of elect which ought ever to be esteemed as one man.

Merepark, who was the fortunate proprietor of the Morning Star, as well as of the charming Lady Theresa, proposed to me to accompany him that year, in a cruise to the Mediterranean. Lady Merepark was to be of

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our ship's company. I had rather she had stayed at Cowes; but *that* regarded the will of her ladyship's and the Morning Star's lord and master.—I did not, however, so much regret her being with us, when, on fine moonlight nights, the harmonious couple were good-natured enough to amuse me and the dolphins by singing duets; and if most "silver sweet sound lovers' tongues by night," I can assure my readers that the Notturni of Lord and Lady Merepark as we sat together on deck, enjoying the fragrant breeze from shore, off the coast of Sicily, were as mellifluous as the song of the Sirens.

I liked Merepark's singing as much better than his talking, as I had once been disposed to prefer his conversation to his vocal efforts. Since his secession from diplomatic life, he was growing domestic as George III;—resided three fourths of the year at Chippenham Park,—and was, of course, as crotchety and dogmatical

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as all people who choose to exempt themselves from the modifying influences of society.

More than once had he forced me to exclaim, in the words of a poet now laid on the shelf, and whom I consequently always find on mine,

> Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
> And make colloquial happiness your care,
> Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
> A duel, in the form of a debate;
> The clash of negatives and jar of words,
> Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords.

From the days of Plato, I scarcely know an individual qualified to think for himself, in opposition to his times and country. It requires about a million of men to form an Opinion with a degree of force intitling it to be stereotyped. I hold, (I fear it may be a Danbyical dogma,) that there are about a dozen capital Thinkers in Europe, patented to have notions of their own;—viz, London, Paris, Petersburg, Vienna, Rome, Berlin, Ma-

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drid, Munich,—and so forth. These have a right to argue among themselves, on all topics affecting the enlightenment or amelioration of mankind. But little rap-on-the-knuckles disputations between the egotism of John Thompson and the egotism of Tom Johnson,—or between Cis Danby and Lord Merepark,—are just as much to the purpose, as the spitting of two tabby cats, or the snarling of two terriers out of employ.

Whenever Merepark began to dogmatize, accordingly, I said to him, as nature did to Béranger,

Chante, chante, pauvre petit!

which he did,—divinely;—and so we left the balance of power and of the budget, to those M.P.'d into the privilege of prosing.—Lady Merepark did not look at all obliged to me. She knew, probably, that the whims and fancies which *I* did not choose to accept as infallible, would be inflicted on *her*, like a papal

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bull, *per* tyranny matrimonial, at Chippenham Park.

Poor thing!—she was the pattern of a wife! How little I surmised, when, in my puppy days at Maybush Lodge, I pronounced her to be a nonentity, how charming a compound part of the monotonous domestic happiness of an English earl such a nonentity might become!—She was the very thing for a nine months-in-the-country sort of life; a loving mother to little Lord Chippenham, and a loving wife to his father. All her ambitions were bounded by the park paling.

If I should ever live to accomplish a park paling, I trust Providence will send me precisely such a wife. And why not? It is impossible to guess how one may end. The jocose old screw of a lawyer, whom I had found rubbing his hands in a barn in Southampton Buildings, in 1810, was now, in 1823, a wealthy baronet, residing in a handsomely furnished house in Chandos Street, Cavendish

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Square !—Pepper-and-salt being replaced by a butler, square and solemn as the Principal of a college,—but better dressed.

Such progresses are of daily occurrence in England. A wealthy landowner's man of business is as sure to fatten in means, as his stalled oxen in flesh; and a baronetcy is cheap requital for such services as killing off a young lady likely to inveigle one of the junior branches into matrimony; more particularly when there is a borough in the family, and only one younger son to provide for.

It is true Sir Joseph Hanmer had achieved the distinctions and comforts of life after losing the five senses that might have enabled him to enjoy them; and now, he lay, like a superannuated wolf in his lair, feeble and edentated, yet shunned and dreaded through his former ill-repute. The creature had even sat in parliament for half a session. Think of such a man as old Hanmer being called, by such

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a man as Danby,—"my friend, the Honourable Member for Sneakington!"—

I know not why I recall, at this portion of my memoirs, the name of one who, God wot! occupies small space in my regard; unless, indeed, because the reminiscences therewith connected were painfully revived by a visit I paid to Cintra, while touching at Lisbon in our cruise.

The Mereparks were, of course, occupied with the city, the opera, the embassy,—Mafra, the Necessidades, the Ajudas, and the various lions of the place.—We were to be at anchor only a couple of days. The first of these I devoted to a pilgrimage of grace to San Josè!

The quinta was all but in ruins. Old Barnet's property had been converted into a chancery suit by Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch; and was, perhaps, the remote origin of the comfortable house in Chandos Street, Cavendish Square. The roof was falling in, and there

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were stems of oats which had sprung up and withered unmolested between the floor of the drawing-room, in the place where poor Yilko formerly sidled on his stand!

The garden was a wilderness. The orange orchard had run almost as wild as the chestnuts and cork-trees springing from the rifted rocks of the Peninha. The espaliers of myrtle, untrimmed for years, were sheeted with snow-white blossoms; closing up, by their intermingling branches, the road to the postern door. —For years, no one had passed that way.—It was useless to think of reaching the cemetery in that direction.

It was easy enough to make the circuit by the public entrance. To accomplish this, I had to penetrate through the grove of pine-trees—of all the objects that presented themselves, the one which had experienced least alteration in the lapse of those thirteen busy years. Sir Joseph's chancery job had effected no change in the mystic characters upon the

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venerable bark of those majestic trees. The same mossy fibrous ground was under my feet,—the same dim, chastened, cathedral-like light was diffused around me,—so often described by poor Emily in our happy interchange of thought and feeling.

From this mysterious twilight, I emerged into the little burying-ground. Death had not been inactive. Of the many despatched by the caprice of northern physicians to end their consumptive days in Lisbon, a few repose at Cintra. Since my last visit to the spot, tombs had arisen,—marble columns,—crosses of granite within trellised enclosures,—gloomy with cypresses and willows, or bright with flowers.

I passed them by unheeded. I made my way straight towards the spot overhung by the outstretching branches of the bay-tree. I could have reached the spot blindfold!—And it was well for me that my memory was so retentive; for not a trace remained of the stone tablet!—Within the railing I had caused to

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be erected around it, before I quitted Lisbon, the honeysuckle planted by my hand had sprung up in wanton luxuriance; and no friend of the family being at hand to direct or remunerate the gardener of the cemetery, to whom was consigned the care of the other tombs and funereal gardens, it formed an entangled mass of blossoms over the grave, completely concealing all record of her who slept beneath that flowery dome.

The sun was crimsoning the west when I reached the spot; and the overpowering fragrance which evening dew extracts from the pale tassels of the woodbine, pervaded the air, till the senses seemed to ache with its sweetness!—

Thus it was that the memory of Emily deserved to be embalmed!—Nature remained faithful to a grave to which none survived to offer the tribute of their tears.—That tangled and perfumed mass of mournful-looking blossoms, formed the most appropriate monument to the memory of the dead.—I looked towards

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the craggy summits of the mountains visible between the dark cones of the cypress trees, on which the evening sun was shedding its effulgence, and prayed that from the regions of the Blessed the anguish of my soul might bring down forgiveness of my fault !—

Next day, we were sailing for England. But the influence of these renovated associations saddened me for the remainder of the voyage. I could enjoy nothing ;—neither the sweet music of the Wolvertons, nor the calmness of those halcyon summer nights, at sea so far more enjoyable than the fervour of garish day.

The Mereparks having engagements with visitors at Chippenham Park, altered their plan of touching at Cowes, and made straight for Southampton. It was a delicious evening on which we sailed up the river. After the languid atmosphere of the sweet south, there was something refreshing in the stirring air of home ; more especially intermingled as it was

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with the breath of gardens and the emanation of the oak-woods, from the shores of the Southampton river.

As we sat together on deck, I persuaded Merepark to indulge me for the last time with a favourite ballad, the words of which originated, I suspect, in the sunny climes we had been traversing.

BALLAD.

She look'd so fair—when, fresher than the morn,
Her happy laugh rang through the greenwood boughs;—
She look'd so fair—when, from the tangled corn,
Tearing the wild flowers to adorn her brows;—
She look'd so fair—when, calm, at dewy even
Watching the streamlet's waves go listless by;
She look'd so fair—beneath the moonlit heaven,
Her earnest face uplifted to the sky!—

How fair,—when o'er her thrilling lyre she hung
Till from her lips unearthly music stole!—
How fair—when,—whisperingly, her faltering tongue
Reveal'd her modest eloquence of soul!—
How fair—when, in the old cathedral aisle,
Upon her knees absorb'd in silent pray'r;
The poor still crowding round to court her smile,
As though a saint from heaven were kneeling there!—

How fair, how passing fair, when in the dance
Her buoyant footsteps wild outflew the rest;

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How fair, how passing fair, when at her glance
The proud grew humble, and the humble blest.
How fair!—And yet, too young to Love!—The spell
Was yet unspoken!—But the time may come!—
Oh, hush!—oh, hush! Hear ye the funeral bell?—
Yon nodding hearse hath borne her to her home!—

But it was no moment for a strain so doleful! The Mereparks were in high spirits because about to be reunited to their children and park palings;—I, from the force of sympathy. The tide took us in at dusk. The cheerful lights of the city were gleaming in all directions; and the familiar cries of an English crowd greeted us as a friendly salutation.

On arriving at the hotel we were eager for dinner; hailing as delicacies those much contemned simplicities of cod and oyster sauce,—partridges and panada,—and other items of English fare, which would make Paris die of an indigestion. Merepark and I resolved to make a carouse of it. I never felt in higher glee. I had a charming autumn before me; first a week at the Royal Cottage,—next a

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capital party for pheasant shooting at —— Abbey; and after roughing it for a few weeks, one feels that the smooth sumptuosities of a lordly establishment are not altogether unenviable.

As we were to start early, Lady Merepark wished me good night when she retired from the dinner-table; and Merepark and I ordered a fresh bottle of claret, drew our chairs closer to the fire, and began to give way to the feeling of social communicativeness, which the first fire of the season is sure to inspire. England is the only country in the world where men shut out the chaste creation, and prose over their wine; which I conclude is what renders our morals so superior to the residue of civilized Europe.

On that occasion, we indulged. We talked over adventures of our old Downing Street days, and laughed over events of more recent occurrence at Palermo, till we neither of us saw any fault to find with our claret, — a proof that we did not see very clearly.—Nay,

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having persuaded Merepark, who though now on dry land, was half-seas-over, to indulge me with a drinking song he had learnt at

—fair Cadiz, rising o'er the dark blue sea,

from a rollicking Spanish muleteer,—the room began to be filled with shapes resembling those that clustered round the loneliness of St. Anthony!—I have little doubt that Byron, when galloping half-mad,—half-intoxicated,—through the pine-woods, after solemnizing those terrible obsequies of Shelley, felt much as I felt that night!—

I know not what else prompted me to blaspheme as I did, all that was good and fair, in my confidences to my companion. If in Satan's memorandum-book be enregistered all the abominable falsehoods interchanged between man and man, on such occasions, I suspect the account will contain many a grievous crime unwhipped of justice. Merepark's stupid maudlin wonder and applause encouraged me to ex-

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aggeration, till I began to describe all sorts of imaginary adventures with the graver of Callot and the periods of poor little Matt. Lewis. —Heaven forgive me !—

At last, it was time to retire. The fire was burnt out,—the wine was drunk out,—the candles were about to follow their example, and disappear also.—We went laughing and pushing each other up stairs, like too silly schoolboys. — Everybody was in bed in the house, but the drowsy waiter who had sat up to give us our bed candles. When we reached No. 4, Merepark, after several ineffectual attempts to turn the handle of the door, blundered in, wishing me good night; while I proceeded towards the end of the corridor, to the room where, before dinner, I could just remember having washed my hands.

I suppose the wine I had drunk did not tend to increase the clearness of my perceptions, — for, having reached the one I conceived to be mine, I threw it open with vio-

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lence,—bursting in, to take possession of my territories.

An exclamation of "hush!" was the first sound that saluted me; unnecessary, however, —for the startling spectacle before me sufficed to paralyze my faculties.—It was the chamber of death,—a gorgeous coffin,—*two* gorgeous coffins,—with lights burning at the head, and domestics in deep mourning, keeping watch over the dead!—

Sobered by the awful spectacle, and deeply ashamed of my intrusion, I was retreating in haste. Already, the waiter was at my heels; with apologies, explanations, and offers to conduct me to my own room.

"They had said nothing about *the body*, thinking it might be disagreeable to the lady to sleep under the same roof with a corpse. But they could assure me it was only there for the night. The funeral had arrived late in the evening, and was to be embarked early in the morning for Ireland. The bodies were

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on their way to my lord's family vault in the county of Limerick."

I had scarcely reached the threshold of my own door, when the fellow made this communication. Staggering to a chair, I had just strength to demand the *name* of the family seat in the county of Limerick,—I had not courage to pronounce that of the dead.—

"I think the butler said Craig's Castle, sir; but my Lord Wolverton has another seat in—"

* * * * * *

I heard no more!—Helena, my Helena! While I was defiling her innocent name, by words that ought to have festered my lying lips, she lay dead—*dead*—within my reach!

The uproar of my senseless merriment must have shaken the heavy folds of her pall!—

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CHAPTER VI.

As the warm heart expands, the eye grows clear,
And sees beyond the slave's and bigot's grasp.
PROCTOR.

One who saw,
Observed nor shunn'd the busy scenes of life,
But mingled not; and 'mid the din, the stir,
Lived as a separate spirit. ROGERS.

PEOPLE are apt to assert that nothing consoles us more surely for the loss of those who are dear to us, than to find their death a cause of general lamentation.

This may be the case with statesmen and heroes, whose fame is in the breath of nations. There is consolation in the respect paid to the memory of such a man as Lord Holland; at whose recent decease, those to whom he was endeared as a friend, wept as for a rela-

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tive; while those to whom he was only known as a public man, grieved for him as a friend.

But as regards a young and delicate woman, the regrets showered upon her grave serve only to increase the bitterness of the hour. I could not take up a newspaper just then, but it was filled with nauseous paragraphs relative to "the bereaved Earl of Wolverton," or "the late lovely and lamented Countess of Wolverton."—There was a detailed account of the funeral;—the "affecting" embarkation of the bodies of the mother and child.—All that the vile taste of the times could perpetrate in the way of fine writing, was twopence a-lined by the Limerick Chronicle, announcing, in letters half a yard long, the arrival of THE CORPSE—(GOD! how I hate that word!) of the Son and Heir of the ancient house of Wolverton; as if the little atom of clay, deposited on a spot wherein it had never exercised even its puny powers of vitality, were worthy of mention in the same page with the wreck

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of all that was gentle,—all that was beautiful;—martyrized by the splendours of life, as though her diamond tiara had been a crown of thorns!—

How often do the old fix their cold, callous, lustreless gaze upon the young, either living or dead, as if they were *too* young to have suffered!—Blockheads!—it is *only* the young who are capable of real sorrow or real enjoyment. In after life, the selfishness of human nature supplies a styptic for every wound; and Utilitarianism has her pockets filled with Family Cerate, to salve it over. We recall to mind that it is not worth while to harass our few remaining years with regrets; that all will soon be over.—We call this philosophy.—It is simply decadence of mind under the growing ascendency of our material nature.

In the sunshine of girl and boyhood, on the contrary, the expanding blossoms of the soul are readily withered by some sudden frost of human sorrow. To the very young heart,

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tne stab of the moral assassin conveys a death-blow. At thirty, one calls in a surgeon; at ——ty, the flesh has become mere cartilage, and defies the rapier's edge. Though snatched from earth with the down of childhood still soft upon their cheeks, the heartbreak contained beneath the pall of Juliet, or within the crimson velvet coffin of the Countess of Wolverton, were sufficient to have tinged a long after-life with despair!—

I knew it. *I* understood it. The gossips of society observed, that autumn, at their splendid dessert-tables, over their pine-apples and peaches, their claret and Burgundy, or clustering round their blazing fires after dinner, with due regard to their satin dresses and Mecklin lace,—"What a shocking thing it was that poor Lady Wolverton dying in child-bed so soon after her marriage!—Such a beautiful creature, with such a charming house in town, and such a fine place in Hampshire!—Really everything to make life desirable!—I wonder

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whether Lord Wolverton will marry again?"—No one but Cecil Danby knew what a glorious escape she had made from the charming house in town, and fine place in Hampshire, loathsome to her feelings!—that she had been tormented into avenging herself upon an ingrate, by a brilliant match,—then broken her heart,—offering up to Heaven the atonement of her tears, and the sacrifice of penitence and prayer!—But she was at peace;—yea! at peace.—Nothing could touch her further.

I hope and believe that I *felt* on the occasion;—not, indeed, with a sorrow even unto death, as in my brighter days at Cintra;—but when I struggled back into society the following spring, scarcely a fellow at White's but saluted me with "Halloo, Cis, my boy!—what on earth have you been doing with yourself?—You look as if you had come out of the tombs."—

I answered not the tauntings of their levity. Of what avail to admit to such men that I had been undergoing martyrdom?—Had I dis-

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played to them the wounds of my agony, instead of being convinced, like the incredulous Apostle, they would have persisted in their derision.—I did well to hold my peace !—

Will the world believe,—I mean the world, and not the fine world,—that these scorners attributed my anguish of spirit to *another* death, which had occurred in the interval ?—that of Lady Susan Danby.—They thought me anxious lest Danby should marry again, and disappoint my expectations of inheritance by a son and heir !—

They were, perhaps, justified in the surmise ; for if *my* despondency had another origin, the exultation of Lord Ormington on the occasion was disgracefully genuine. It was frightful to see with what glee he wore his broad hems and black coat. I doubt whether any family event, since Danby's wedding, had inspired him with such ardent imaginings as poor Lady Susan's funeral. He saw apparitions of crowned children rising out of her grave, like those in

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the vision vouchsafed by the weird sisters to Macbeth.

He was not, however, the only person who speculated upon the event. Lady Harriet Vandeleur, now approaching her fiftieth year,—who had consequently taken up a form of government more becoming her years than flirting or flippancy, began to fire off batteries of tracts and serious books at the widower. She was grown evangelical, much in the same spirit of wrongheadedness she had once fancied herself an infidel; and I suppose it was with a view of enlarging her sphere of benevolence, that she thought the future rent-roll of the future Lord Ormington might be advantageously added to her jointure.

Danby was a person who took all things so quietly, that I verily believe she thought herself making an impression, by her strenuousness in advising him about the bringing up of his daughter, and her officious counsels on topics too sacred to be introduced irreverently

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into pages like these; when, in fact, he listened without hearing, and bore with her impertinence, regarding the former bosom friend of his mother as a sort of troublesome aunt.

Lord Ormington, with his usual charity, chose to infer that I promoted her ladyship's views, in order to secure myself from the new Arthur who might arise from a more propitious alliance, to wither my prospects. He was completely mistaken. If I did not vehemently oppose the foolish old woman's advances, it was because I knew my brother too wise and too good to need being placed upon his guard against giving such a successor to the amiable Lady Susan. I was, in fact, too deeply overpowered by a new and most unexpected affliction, to trouble myself with her proceedings. An event occurred which wrung from my lips the same exclamation as from those of Trelawney, "The world has lost its greatest man,—I, my best friend!"

Byron, who, to borrow the elegant quotation

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of Moore, was fated to gather in Greece a crown of palm or cypress, "*o cipresso, o palma acquistar*,"—Byron sank under the influence of bad diet and a bad climate, at Missolonghi; or, to speak more truly, was bored to death by the practicalities of war-making, and the impracticability of the Philhellenic Committee!

Such a destiny was perhaps assigned him in rebuke to the pride of genius, which had said,

> Seek out, less often sought than found,
> A SOLDIER'S GRAVE, for thee the best,
> There look around and choose thy ground,
> And take thy rest!

But who could have foreseen that one whom Shelley hailed as the Pilgrim of Eternity, would die among menials and *bisognons*, amid the uproar and squibbing of a Greek holiday?

The world raised its usual foolish clamour over the grave.—The dull preached. The bitter sneered. *The wise* WEPT!—And lo! his name is excluded from the pomps and vanities of Westminster Abbey, where only the right

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divine entitles the sinners of this world to be inurned, — and inscribed for evermore in the land's language, and the memory of all who venerate the glories of genius, even when tarnished with a touch of human frailty, such as the improvidence of Scott or the greater sin of the still greater Bacon.

As Pindar sings, "let the ravens croak and clamour, the eagle pursues his flight towards the sun :"

Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον.

Bowed to the earth by these reiterated strokes of affliction, I confined myself that season to the society of my own family. I was fond of dining quietly with Danby, in Connaught Place. My little niece was now ten years old; the most graceful and engaging creature I ever beheld. All the leisure my brother could spare from the duties of public life, he devoted to the education of Jane. But the indulgence and adoration with which he surrounded her, prevented her from imbibing

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the pedantic formality usually affecting the mind of a girl modelled by instruction unfitted for her sex. She was gentle and childish in manners, as became her years; and her singular intelligence rendered her a charming accession to our family circle. Lord Ormington used to sit and look upon her with a sort of wistful tenderness; as if misdoubting him that it was Danby's affection for her that prevented his turning his thoughts, as he ought, to a second marriage. But even *he* was under the influence of her fascinating manners and disposition. Jane could do more with her grandfather than any member of the family.

Of Julia, too, I was the frequent guest. But the society of Herries was a pleasure I could have dispensed with. My brother-in-law already wrote himself Right Hon. and occupied an honourable and lucrative post in the administration. But he was so completely be-officed, — so overwhelmed with business,— that the parish dustman is more his own master.

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In conversation, it was easy to see that he never gave one more than the attention of the eye: in argument, he fought with a reed. He disdained conquest. He cared not for victory, unless in the House, or before the Privy Council. He had no longer a part in the ordinary enjoyments of life; — no longer leisure to be glad or sorry;—his very thoughts and feelings were technical.—

The same harassing anxieties that worried poor Londonderry out of his wits and Canning out of his life, deprived Herries of all pretence to domestic comfort. When a man rises in public life by abilities and industry, his highborn colleagues take care that plenty of occupation shall tax his abilities and industry to the utmost. The consequence is that the distinctions which are to *them* a stimulant to higher enjoyments, are to *him* a burthen beyond endurance. Like the mules expiring in the sunshine, while toiling with heavy loads of the precious metals of the Cordil-

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leras, Herries was overwhelmed with the greatness of his charge. But for the earnest though tranquil sympathy of his wife, he would have sunk under his task. But the weariness of which he was conscious, he of course inflicted upon others.

There was another member of the family from whose company I humbly request the reader to spare all exclamations of surprise at finding me derive satisfaction, — to wit, the Lady Ormington !—

I never pretend to virtues beyond my calibre ; and shall not waste my ink in affecting that it was filial piety, or gratitude for the partiality lavished on my cockadehood, which induced me to spend my evenings in her ladyship's drowsy boudoir, whenever I could induce Miss Richardson, the toady, to solicit a holiday. Prematurely old, (for I have seen women of threescore-years-and-ten far more active and intelligent than my mother when wanting fifteen years of that mortal

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allotment) — she would sit for hours coaxing a little King Charles's spaniel, almost without uttering a syllable ;—*laissant passer le temps*, —like a tree motionless beside some rapid stream.

There we sat together; — musing, if not amusing; in the self-same chamber where my first survey in the glass of my own beauties made a coxcomb of me for life, and where I had seen her ladyship in powder and brocade rehearse her worldly scenes of serious comedy. The gay Axminster carpet had given way to one of more sombre hue; and the great toilet glass was replaced by a highly-varnished *armoire*, containing within its polished mahogany, as a marble sarcophagus conceals unsightly bones, patent medicines of every dye and denomination.—The old furniture, — the chairs and tables,—(with the exception of the last new patent super-easy easy-chair,) were the same as of old; grown dingy and quizzical by contrast with the modern inventions.—I fear the

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human lumber of the spot shared the fate of its chairs and tables !—

But it was on this very account I felt so comfortable with my mother. We had progressed over hill and dale together. Our selfishnesses were enlisted under the same banner; our interests were in common. And if we did not love each other so passionately as some mothers and their offspring, whose mutual affection vies with that of the apes at the Zoological, each loved the other as much as it loved any other created being besides its created Self.

A warm room, excellent tea, and an amusing periodical, always awaited me in Hanover Square; and I suppose it needs no other proof that I was in the wane of my rouéism, that some of my pleasantest evenings in the summer of 1824, were spent by Lady Ormington's fireside,—absorbed in a book, — her ladyship absorbed in *me*. So long as we *can* interest ourselves in a book, we are not much to be pitied.

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Whoever can read with a warm, cordial, and expansive spirit, becomes king, knight, pope, philosopher, as he listeth:

> Ad summum, sapiens uno minor est Jove, dives,
> Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum.

For Jupiter, read of course, King George,—the Jove of *my* Olympus.

The question has been made a text for prize essays whether the king who dreams every night that he is a beggar, or the beggar who dreams every night that he is a king, be the happier man. On this point I have not made up my mind. I seldom *do* make up my mind. All questions are to *me* open questions. But I am satisfied that among the faculties most to be dreaded for the young, and most to be desired for the old, is a busy fancy.—Reverie is the bane of twenty,—the antidote of fourscore.—

I was somewhat betwixt the two, when I found such solace in dreaming away my evenings in Lady Ormington's boudoir. It could not be that, like Tommy Moore,

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I fancied her into some chivalry dame,
While I was her knight of the lance;

but I fancied her a thousand miles off, I know not where,—and myself a thousand miles off,—I know *exactly* where.—

I was living over again in the spirit, all I had already lived in the flesh. I fancied myself hand to hand, heart to heart, with Byron on the sands of the Lido, or among the green pastures of Vévay; exchanging speculations on those solemn topics on which men have speculated for four thousand years, without having so much as determined whether the tree of knowledge be a nonpareil or a crab.—I fancied myself watching once more the lightning-like coruscations of his genius, as developed in word and glance. I fancied myself mortified and irritated, as of old, to see him scatter good seed upon the sterile rock; defiling his noble nature by dupehood to any artful woman who flattered glozingly enough to win upon his confidence.

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Would that my fancies concerning him had gone no further!—But I could not help sometimes figuring to myself that lonely death-bed —that perplexed spirit,—and the bewilderment of soul of one who, having so many accounts to balance with the world, found himself suddenly overtaken by mists of night, alone upon the barren mountain!—Had I been there—but why indulge in those ever-recurring regrets! Cintra, — Venice, — Missolonghi, — stand in my memory like the crosses which in Catholic countries signalize the site where murder hath been done; before which, pausing suddenly amid his everyday routine of life, the peasant falls on his knees and prays,—then abruptly resumes his plodding way and familiar occupations.

I was beginning to live chiefly in the past. One is apt to retire from the busy scene of life, like a Lord Chamberlain from the presence of Majesty, *à reculons*. At thirty-five, one's pleasantest days lie in the rear. One can't help looking back. I do not mean to say that

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some men at five-and-thirty are not, like oaks and yews at a century, still in their infancy. But a Cis Danby,—at fifteen a *petit courrier des dames*, and at twenty a *roué*,—becomes at forty "a very foolish fond old man," more foolish and more fond than Lear at double the age.

Some years were still wanting, however, of my two-score; and there was no reason I should not enjoy them in my own way. My own way was a way most peculiarly my own. After undergoing two or three desperate heart-quakes, the structure of one's feelings loses its equilibrium. Cracks are perceptible on all sides, and one's mind exhibits as perplexing a study for the curious in mathematics, as the leaning Tower of Pisa.

The longer we float along the stream of life, the better we begin to understand the fable of the vessel of iron and the vessel of clay; and if incompetent to convert our fragile materials into sterner stuff, the further we recede from contact with the hard and powerful the better.

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The hollowness of worldlings matters but little, so long as the inflation of youth and spirits enables one to be as hollow as they. But there are some natures, like certain precious stones, of which the surface first acquires consistency; crystallizing inwardly from the groundwork thus matured, till, the interstices being filled up with a bright and adamantine substance, the gem becomes perfected.

Conscious that my own hollowness was gradually disappearing under some such mineralogic process,—that, as Nature abhors a vacuum, she was good-naturedly furnishing the empty bookshelves of my brain, and filling with honey the waxen cells of my heart,—I withdrew from the world, in order to favour her operations. I refrained, at least, from the gaudy mobs and uproarious crowds of public life, and adopted the philosophy of the poet.

Car hélas! dans nos salons, où la foule est si grande,
Qui sait d'ailleurs,
Sous les brillans dehors d'un plaisir de commande,
Où sont nos cœurs?—

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Par des complimens faux l'on procède à des blâmes
Qu'on dit tous bas !—
Croyez-moi ! restez seule avec huit cent mille âmes,
Qui n'en ont pas !—

Between the eight hundred thousand souls who have no soul, and any single soul, equally deficient, the balance of soul is pretty equal ;—and so, retreating from the multitude, I adhered to the boudoir, with its silent valetudinarian and stuffed lap-dog. Lady Ormington seldom interrupted my studies. Her lucubrations were never very luminous ; but so long as she had remained gay enough to be inconsistent, her vagaries were not unamusing. People who blow hot and cold upon every subject under discussion keep alive one's attention ; but the moment they begin to blow tepid, they only added an unit to the soul-less eight hundred thousand, whose tedious humdrum psalmody puts to sleep half the better purposes of the nobler spirits of this nether sphere.

The first indication I gave of the influence of such companionship upon my mind, was by

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accepting a place at Court. I refer my readers to the Red Book of 1825, for the specification of my office.—My motives in re-entering the course of public life, I rise to explain.

As regards human nature in general, we have Milton's authority for the universal servility of mankind. "Half the world," saith he, "prefers living under masters."—As regards human nature in my own person, I found the vindictive hints of Lord Ormington that my inactivity in life arose from views upon the inheritance of my brother, every day more insupportable. Loving and respecting Danby as I did, such inferences were sacrilegious in my ears; and I was consequently grateful to the faithful friendship with which his Majesty on his return from his tour, once more tendered me an appointment in his household. I was literally forced into the assumption of ambition, by having incurred an odium inevitable perhaps among the many evils of an origin obliquitous as mine.

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Moreover, I felt capable of doing the state, or rather the country, some service. I have dwelt modestly on my personal merits; conceiving them to be sufficiently manifested in my deeds,—as the prowess of the lion is attested by the whitening bones of his victims, heaped round his den. But it becomes my duty to declare that my inborn graces were now refined into a charm beyond the ordinary fascination of charmers, by much travel and much converse with all that was best and brightest in civilized Europe

To extinguish such acquirements in the obscurity of private life, was not altogether fair to the country. The true patriot sacrifices himself to the interests of his fatherland. If the sale of the Houghton collection of pictures to a foreign power were an act of profanation, I felt that I should "stand accountant for as great a sin," in withholding from public example those graces of mind and manners, which so amply fulfilled the promise of my cockadehood, and were so peculiarly adapted to adorn the court and times of George IV.

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The public hailed my appointment with satisfaction. The court was regarded by the tasteful as the head-quarters of taste. The court gave the law to the town,—the town to the country; and London was not forced to entertain broken-down foreigners to instruct it what it should eat,—what it should drink,—and wherewithal it should be clothed. The sailor court, which succeeded the tailor court, was comparatively indifferent in such matters; and, during the reign of the sovereign who gave us the Reform Bill, more than one false prophet arose to shake the established faith of the table and the toilet. But George IV. was an absolute monarch in all relating to that which maketh glad the stomach of man, or sad the heart of woman.—

The civilized world, long cognizant of my claims, admitted that the pupil was worthy of the patron; that, in such a court, Cis Danby would make himself heard of. They foresaw an Alberoni,—a Mazarin,—a Richelieu,—a Walpole,—a Potemkin,—a Metternich, in

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one whose influence was based upon all that had made of Sir John Harris a knight of the everything in heraldic Europe, from A. to Z. inclusive.

I was apprized of my own power by the malignancy with which, at my first levee, I found myself regarded by the said knight, who

Bore like the Turk no brother near the throne.

I had already an enemy at court!—

What a strange thing it is that no Power of modern times, except the Yankees, can be induced to believe that "Union is strength!"—Swift, the Dean, observes in one of his letters to Pope, that "every age contains half a dozen master-spirits which, if they would only enter into combination, might drive the world before them."

I forget whether he adds, or whether it be my own suggestion, that the foresight of Providence endows them with incompatibilities fatal to all possibility of amalgamation. At the moment in question, there were half a dozen of us who might have revolutionized the coteries. At this

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present writing, there are a score who might revolutionize the country, — viz. Cis Danby, Henry Pelham, Vivian Grey, — Brougham, Lyndhurst, Macaulay ;—Rogers, Moore, Luttrell, Ginger Stubbs ;—Morgan, Gore, Norton, Tussaud ;—Lockhart, Fonblanque, Dickens,—Carlyle, Sydney Smith, Dicky Milnes, Dan O'Connell, and Lord Cardigan, who might form a tremendous battalion if they could only manage to shave in the same shop.—Luckily, we abominate each other.—I defy even the five thousand horse power of genius to force us into conspiracy.

Even in private life, how little does the spirit of concentration tend to the consolidation of masses. "*O mes amis! il n'y a plas d'amis!*" quoth a French writer,—but I believe he cribbed it from Cicero.

Of all those of my own caste rich enough to indulge in their whims and fancies, I am acquainted with only a single man warm-hearted enough to have furnished his walls and albums (dear Hart: alive!) with portraits of

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his friends, executed at his own expense;—whilst the late Lord Dudley was cynical enough to devote five thousand pounds to the effigy of his dog,—a bitter hint of *his* estimate of worldly friendship,—an unfair one, too,—for he was a man beloved of many.

Law,—physic,—divinity,—army,—navy,—household,—police force,—are all so many houses divided against themselves. No two among them, any more than any pair of hackney-coach horses, can draw together. When I joined the coterie at Carlton House, so far from hoping to fraternize with my courtly brethren, the utmost I ambitioned was to avoid being victimized by their minikin factions.

There was a considerable lull just then in public affairs. With the exception of Spain, (a country which having an unlucky knack of matching its right hand against its left, was, as usual, at fisticuffs with itself,) there was very little fighting going on in Europe, except among the patronesses of Almack's. The Holy Alliance still encircled with its *cordon sanitaire*

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the kingdoms of the earth. The three-cornered hats of the Jesuits had the best of it in France; the cocked-hats of the standard footmen of the Exclusives, in London. Fashion here, and Fanaticism there, was the ascendant influence. The *το καλον* lay with the Propaganda and the Patronesses, Madame L—— and Cardinal ——; the lull was, in short, producing the same results as the becalming described by Coleridge, in his fearful ballad of the "Ancient Mariner."

This was highly satisfactory to a man of my views and pretensions. *My* notion of transcendent enjoyment is to take the busiest life in the quietest way; to sit in a patent reclining chair, and behold affairs of state delineated before me, as by a camera-obscura.—I have no taste for owlifying in a hollow tree. I detest a hermitage, whose mossy couch is full of earwigs, and whose maple dish full of raw carrots. My vegetables must be dressed *à la maître d'hôtel;* and my mattresses, not my shirt, be of horsehair. In other words, the Royal

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Cottage concentrated my *summum bonum* of human felicity.

The time is gone by for Kings to retire from the world into the dreariness of a cloister. The example of that wrongheaded Emperor Charles V. has convinced his royal successors, that since in all communities, governmentally constituted, intrigues and factions must arise, it is less worrying to arbitrate the pleasant squabbles of lords and ladies, than the bitter animosities of frowsy monks.

I see my Public pricking up its ears, in earnest expectation of the Diary of a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, as a pendent to the Diary of the Lady. But I beg to assure them, as poor old Barnet did *me*, that "I am a gentleman still; who, *who* says I am not a gentleman?" They have consequently nothing to expect as regards the privacy of my royal master, more than they managed to learn by peeping over the palings of his rustic palace. In my opinion, the world has nothing to do with the leisure of royalty.

My own leisure, however, is much at their

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service; and I can assure them that its incidents multiplied most agreeably the moment my pathway became established in the perpetual sunshine of public distinction. Nobody who has experienced the sensation, will dispute the pleasure of being somebody. A somebody is of consequence to everybody; and it is gratifying to feel that one's finger-aches will create proper sympathy, and that if one chooses to tell a long story people are obliged to listen to it. The merits one derives from a little petty patronage, are beyond computation. I cannot suppose that I grew either taller or handsomer per force of the mere inscription of my name in the Household. And yet, the way in which I began to be whispered off into corners, and the enormous increase of my satin-paper correspondence department, might have convinced a man of less enlightened experience that he had added a cubit to his stature.

It was about three months after accepting my appointment, that one night, at a charming party in George Street, Sir Moulton Drewe

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hinted to me in a whisper that the beautiful Mrs. Brettingham was most desirous of making my acquaintance. There was something imploring in his accents; for I was much in the habit of "dispersing" his supplications, Jove-like, "into empty air." For once, therefore, I smiled upon his suit. Upon Mrs. Brettingham, the pretty, witty Mrs. Brettingham,—one could do no less than smile; and already, I began to foresee in the distant horizon——

"The devil, if you please, sir!"—

"Shut the door, O'Brien. I am busy."

"Please sir,—he won't wait."—

"The devil be d—d!—Show him up — or down, —while I perpetuate, handkerchief in hand, my few last words.

Ahem!—

Public!—I do, as is my duty,

Honour the shadow of your shoe-tie;

and I appeal to your sense of propriety whether Mr. Bentley might not have found some cleanlier and more responsible internuncio to apprize me that I am exceeding the limits of your patience;

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— that, as the Rhine forms the boundary of France proper, CECIL (improper) must be limited within the thirteenth sheet of Vol. III.?

I have a thousand things to say. I am coming to the very pith of my Adventures. You are quite in the mood to enjoy them. The deuce of a thing stirring in this dullest of worlds. The frost has set in as hard as the heart of the Hoo Union. No chance of a Dissolution or a thaw; even Syria is beginning to

> ——————— wear
> Her plum'd and jewell'd turban with a smile
> Of peace.—

And considering that the ravenous maw of the reading world, like the cavern in the Eldin Mine, which engulphed forty ton of rubbish per diem for twenty years without any sensible diminution of the vacuum, is capable of swallowing *any*thing,— I have no doubt you would have welcomed me had I arrived even four-in-hand; my fourth volume being devoted to sketches of my days of official consequence; when, instead of visiting Melton like a wetched cur of a younger brother, to be mounted, hap-

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hazard, by my friends, not one of whom would have cared had I broken my neck, I had progressed into a man having hunters and Helots of his own.

But Publishers, it seems, swear by three volumes, as Pluto by the three heads of Cerberus; and as a Tripod was indispensable to the inspiration of the Pythoness, three-times-three and rapturous applause wait upon the novels of Bulwer, Marryat, James!—

I submit. Needs must, saith the proverb, when the devil drives. As the little *ink*ubus is waiting for my last page, let me jump at a conclusion. Nevertheless, if any reader should experience especial desire to hear more, I am not an unsociable fellow. My cigars are good, and a gossip beside a glowing fire is, after all, a pleasanter thing than all this eternal mending of pens.

For such an indulgence, however, the most undeniable references will be required. It will be necessary (as in obtaining a tide-waiter's situation) to produce a parochial certificate of *bonos mores*, and to make affidavit of being free

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from debt. But I do not withhold my confidence from persons in easy circumstances, and of exemplary morality.

I shall be found as easy a talker as I am a simple writer. As Seneca says—"Quæ veritati operam dat oratio, incomposita sit et simpl——"

"Not wait?—Not allow me time to finish my quotation?"—

Unhappy MS.!—Go then to the devil, with all thine imperfections on thy head!—

If ever again I write a book, (prospered by the kind patronage of P. P.,—I allude not to the renowned clerk of that name, but to the Paying Public,)—I shall take care to reserve to myself, by an especial clause, exemption from the interference of the Diabolus of New Burlington Street; as well as the privilege of selecting my own time and place for the inscription of that cabalistic word

The End.

London: Printed by Samuel Bentley, Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

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